



NAVY NEWS

DECEMBER 2017



Hi, Tide

● New tanker RFA Tidespring is escorted by HMS Sutherland off Portland after her maiden replenishment at sea refuelling the frigate. Hours later, the support ship debuted in Portsmouth ahead of a formal service of dedication (see page 6).

Picture: LPhot Dean Nixon, FRPU West

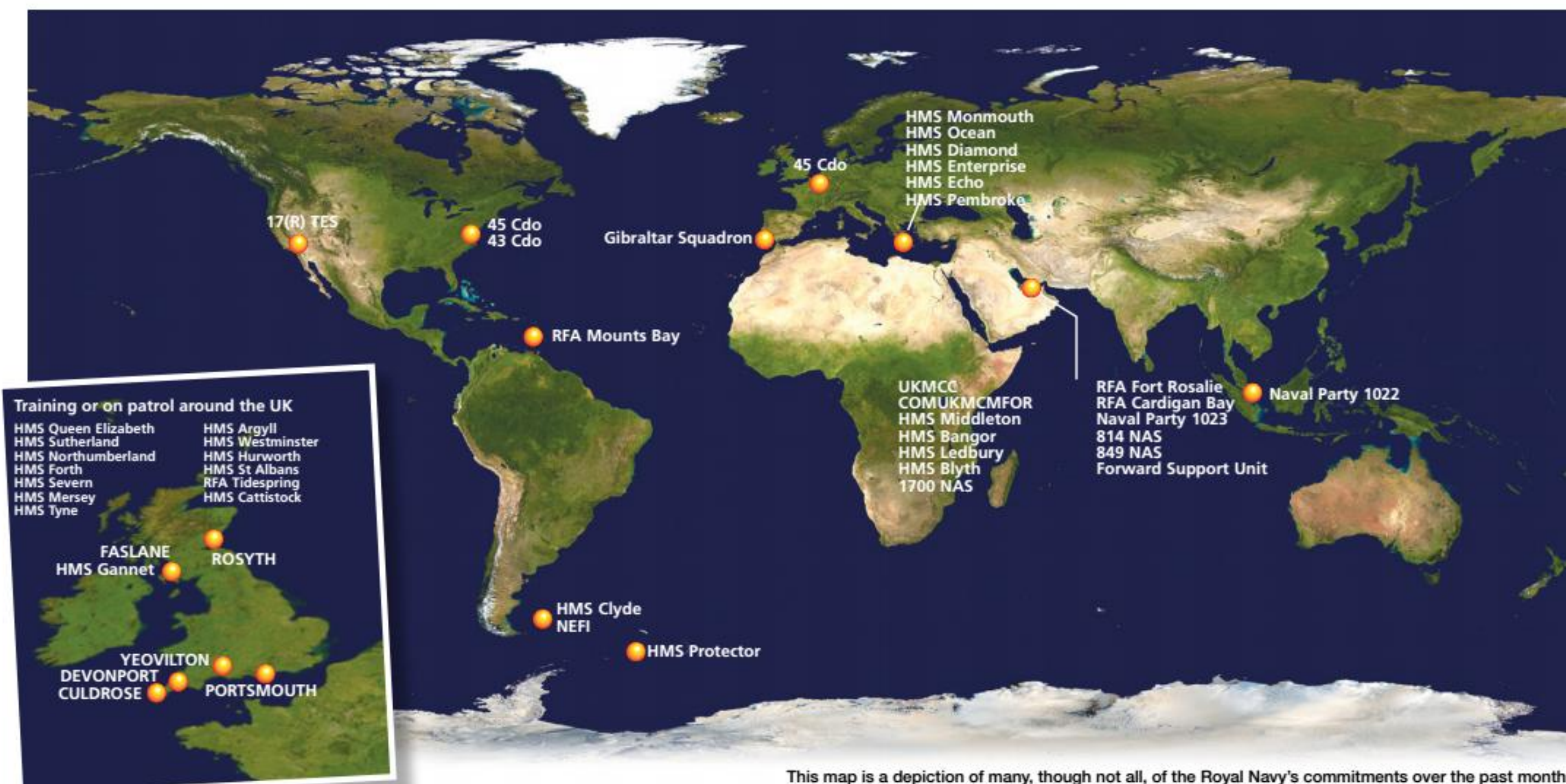
Commandos train in Virginia swamps – pages 20-21

... and on the streets of Antwerp – Page 9



Off-sale date: December 22 2017

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This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month

FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

WE END 2017 with a bang, not a whimper. Bombs. Lots of 'em. German ones. British ones. Home-made ones. Poisonous ones. On land. At the bottom of the sea. In lakes. In the Gulf.

Yes, while most people wouldn't dream of taking a dip outdoors at this time of year, the RN's bomb disposal teams have been heavily engaged.

Among the most unusual tasks in recent years: recovering mustard gas shells from a Lincolnshire lake, safely completed by **Southern Diving Unit 2** (see page 4)... who also neutralised a wartime anti-invasion pipe bomb laid at the former HMS Daedalus airbase (see page 7)... and, aided by **HMS Cattistock**, a German 500lb bomb which ended up a few yards from a North Sea gas pipeline (see page 9).

Not to be outdone **Fleet Diving Unit 3** plunged into the warmer waters of the Gulf to recover mines as part of a training exercise to learn what makes explosive devices 'tick' (see page 4).

And members of the **Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sub Aqua Association** headed into the depths of Scapa Flow to inspect the wrecks of the German High Seas Fleet (see pages 16-17), an episode which is arguably the highlight of our 2017 **Remembrance** period coverage (see pages 16-19). Also featured are: sailors from **HMS Prince of Wales** visiting the battlefields of France and Belgium; **HMS Enterprise** providing stunning scans of the wrecks of 1982; **HMS Clyde** taking HMS Coventry survivors back to the site of the sinking; and a round-up of November events at home and abroad.

HMS Monmouth paid her respects ten days before the rest of the Fleet, pausing on November 1 to remember the loss of her namesake WW1 predecessor, a cruiser sunk at Coronel in 1914. Commemorations aside, the Black Duke has led RN operations east of Suez for much of the year, ending with an Anglo-French-US exercise (see opposite).

HMS Queen Elizabeth spent three weeks at sea on her second period of trials. Having completed them, she entered Portsmouth to prepare for her commissioning on December 7 in the presence of The Queen (see page 5).

Entering Portsmouth a few days ahead of the carrier was the first of the new Tide-class tankers, **RFA Tidespring**, preparing for her very own big day: a dedication service (see page 6).

Another key piece of the carrier/carrier task group jigsaw is helicopter support; **RNAS Culdrose** turned herself into an 'aircraft carrier on land' to practise the ability of her Merlins and Sea Kings to safeguard the 65,000-tonne warships (see page 6).

The Arbroath-based Royal Marines of **45 Commando** have found themselves torn between the USA and Belgium, taking part in one of the US Marine Corps' largest exercises on the Eastern Seaboard, **Bold Alligator** (see centre pages) and a unique urban training exercise in the streets of Flanders, **Storm Tide** (see page 15), while **43 Commando** also flew to the USA for the American leg of their combined Tartan Eagle training (see centre pages).

After completing a rigorous inspection by FOST, Antarctic survey ship **HMS Protector** was directed to help the search for missing Argentine submarine ARA San Juan (see page 11).

We bid farewell to stalwart patrol vessel **HMS Severn** which decommissioned after 14 years' service to make way for a new generation of River-class ships (see page 4).

And finally we bring the 100th anniversary of women in the Royal Navy to a close with a round-up of the final **WRNS100** events (see page 13).

Dawn of new era

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

WHEN HMS Queen Elizabeth arrived in Portsmouth this summer, thousands of people were drawn to the water's edge to witness the start of a new era for the Royal Navy.

Amid the celebrations, it would have been easy to forget that just six years previously another carrier had arrived in the same dockyard in altogether less happy circumstances.

If the early retirement of HMS Ark Royal and her Harriers marked the nadir of the Royal Navy's recent fortunes, the fact that 2017 was termed 'the Year of the Navy' is testament to how far our outlook has improved since then.

The important point to understand is that this phrase wasn't coined by the Navy: it came from within government. Against the backdrop of Brexit, ministers recognised the Royal Navy provided a means to demonstrate the UK's continued global commitment.

As the year draws to a close, the Royal Navy has on order, under construction or on trials: one ballistic missile submarine, two aircraft carriers, four attack submarines, three frigates, five offshore patrol vessels and four tankers. No other Navy in Europe is enjoying such a comprehensive programme of renewal.

More milestones will follow next year, as we take delivery of further Tide-class

tankers and Offshore Patrol Vessels. HMS Queen Elizabeth will conduct trials with the F-35B off the United States, deployments are planned to the Gulf and India, and we will make our presence felt in the Arctic and Asia-Pacific. Alongside our standing commitments, the Royal Navy will fly the White Ensign on behalf of 'Global Britain' in every ocean of the world.

Of course, there are challenges as well as opportunities ahead. We remain guided by the expectations the government set for the Royal Navy in the last SDSR, together with the ambition we set for ourselves through Maritime Strategy 2035, and yet one needs only to look at the news to see how quickly the context is changing. International security is deteriorating and demands on the Navy are growing.

The level of defence spending is a matter for government. Within the Navy, our task is to ensure the Fleet and the Corps is manned, trained, equipped and sustained with enough depth and resilience to do what is asked of us properly.

That work is under way across Defence, but the Naval Service is in a strong position. Through recent disaster-relief operations in the Caribbean, we have demonstrated once again the speed, scale, reach and flexibility of maritime forces.

In the longer term, the carriers are coming, renewal of the nuclear deterrent is under way and the supporting projects are in train.

We are open about our manpower challenges and are reconciled to putting them right. Most importantly, we retain a confident vision for the future, and our growing relevance is evidenced by the fact the government wishes to grow the overall size of the Fleet for the 2030s.

The National Shipbuilding Strategy has set out a plan to deliver this ambition; one that binds the Royal Navy even more closely into the UK's export agenda.

So while 2017 may have been the 'Year of the Navy', the opportunities will continue through 2018 and beyond.

In the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers, the UK proved it still has what it takes to be a great maritime nation – and if we hold this course, a new era of opportunity awaits.

■ *View from the Bridge* will return in Navy News later in 2018.

● **HMS Queen Elizabeth** met up with **HMS Dragon** off the south coast of England after the carrier left for the second phase of her sea trials



Intrepid trio in harmony for Gulf workout



● Main image, the FS Jean Bart is flanked by HMS Monmouth and USS Shoup; Clockwise from top left, a sailor heaves in on a berthing line; Sub Lt Alfred Pace with USN Lt Jerick Sablan aboard USS Shoup; Cdr Ian Feasey lays a wreath during the Battle of Coronel memorial service; the killer tomato comes under attack; Monmouth's Wildcat carries out a winning exercise with a patrol vessel from the Cyprus National Guard; Royal Marines head to the Shoup for a boarding exercise

Pictures: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum, HMS Monmouth and MC3 Maria I Alvarez, US Navy



THERE was a Brit, an American and a Frenchman. All with warships armed to the teeth.

What a cracking example of international co-operation and seamanship.

HMS Monmouth, USS Shoup and FS Jean Bart threw their respective hats into the ring for Exercise Intrepid Sentinel, a two-day joint workout in the Gulf of Oman.

Each vessel brought something different to the party: Monmouth is a specialist submarine-hunter – although the emphasis on the Black Duke's nine-month stint east of Suez has been on tackling drugs and arms smuggling.

The Shoup is an all-purpose Arleigh Burke destroyer, and the veteran Jean Bart is designed to protect a task group from air attack.

All three respective navies have a long-standing commitment to keep the waters of the Gulf and Indian Ocean free and open to all lawful seafarers.

Although the goal is common, much of the work the ships carry out is either done independently or as part of national task groups. Link-ups between two navies are sporadic; involving three, even less frequent.

But they need to happen, because in the event of a crisis the three navies – and other allies committed to the Combined Maritime Forces directing the peacekeeping mission from Bahrain – will be expected to work side by side. Seamlessly.

Hence Intrepid Sentinel. Sailors from the three navies traded places with their foreign counterparts to learn about different methods of fending off air attacks, submarines, basic navigation and seamanship and board and search.

Monmouth's Royal Marines/Royal Navy boarding team found £65m drugs after a 60-hour search of a dhow back in the summer. They demonstrated the same techniques – though over a considerably shorter timespan – when they scoured the Shoup, playing the part of a suspect vessel.

The first action-packed day for Black Duke started with USS Shoup's SH-60 helicopter conducting approaches and landings on Monmouth's flight deck.

"Working as the flight ground crew on HMS Monmouth presents many exciting challenges," said AET Chris Dugdale. "One of the opportunities that definitely brings with it job satisfaction is conducting operations with visiting helicopters from partnering nations, such as the Sea Hawk from the Shoup."

The bridge and ops room teams conducted their own departmental training, including an air-defence exercise.

"It was really beneficial to be in constant three-way voice communications with the US and French air warfare officers over a dedicated secure radio net," said Monmouth's Principal Warfare Officer (Air) Lt Cdr Simon Shaw. "This enabled us to build the air picture, reading warnings and taking decisive joint action when necessary. Despite a few language barriers, we fought the air battle, defended the task group and achieved the aim."

The final day saw Monmouth take command of the task group as the trio completed boarding drills and gunnery serials, with a large 'Killer Tomato' serving as the surface target.

All three ships tested their weapons systems, with Monmouth firing her 4.5in gun, her Phalanx and 30mm gun.

Once the Killer Tomato had been squashed, it was time for the three ships' boarding teams to conduct cross-boarding exercises. This not only gave the three boarding teams a chance to hone and refine their skills, scaling different types of ships, but also to learn how boarding teams from the other navies work.

PO(UW) Simon Stockley, a member of Monmouth's

Blue Boarding team, said: "This exercise highlighted the capability of the teams to counter narcotics and weapon smuggling and allowed each nation to learn from the others' experience."

"Our Blue and Green teams have been provided with valuable board-and-search training opportunities on unfamiliar vessels."

Sub Lt Alfred Pace, Monmouth's 2nd Officer of the Watch, who joined the Shoup, said: "Intrepid Sentinel has provided a great opportunity to practise working together as friends and allies. It helped us understand how each country's navy operates."

His comments were underlined by the Black Duke's Commanding Officer Cdr Ian Feasey, who said: "The ability to work with key partner nations is critical to conducting operations. 'Intrepid Sentinel' allowed us to hone and refine our collective fighting capability, ensuring we remain at high readiness to provide a multinational response to emerging situations."

CO of the USS Shoup Cdr Ted Wiederholt said: "This exercise brought together the United Kingdom, French and US Navies in an operational environment, where we successfully developed proficiency across multiple maritime warfare disciplines."

Before Intrepid Sentinel, Monmouth and her embarked flight from 815 NAS escorted HMS Blyth and Ledbury as they left the Gulf. With the transit complete, all three ships conducted various training exercises, including some winch training utilising Monmouth's Wildcat 'Black Jack', a boarding demonstration by Royal Marines from 42 Commando, and warfare training.

CPO(AWT) Charles 'Speedy' Carr, who was closed up in the Operations Room for the exercise, said: "This exercise allows my team to put into practice all the training that we regularly conduct in order to provide a safe and effective escort through the Gulf and the wider region."

"This operational task, during which my team were required to track and monitor numerous air and surface contacts, is a really important part of our job on deployment."

The Strait of Hormuz transit, which lasted around 16 hours, not only saw the three ships travel in unison, but also offered a glimpse into life onboard HMS Monmouth over a 24-hour period while in a higher state of readiness.

Executive Officer Lt Cdr Richard Talbot explained: "The ship assumes a higher state of readiness to ensure the team are ready to react to any eventuality."

"Whether in the Ops Room, bridge, ship's control centre or the chefs in the galley ensuring the ship's company is fed up to four times a day, everyone on board has a part to play."

Monmouth also held a remembrance service on her flight deck, along with a memorial service to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Coronel.

The service, led by LReg Douglas Baird, commemorated the armoured cruiser of the same name and the 738 personnel on board who lost their lives during the Battle of Coronel off Chile in 1914.

On completion of the service, personnel undertook a marathon charity sports event of completing a mile for every life lost on board the fifth HMS Monmouth.

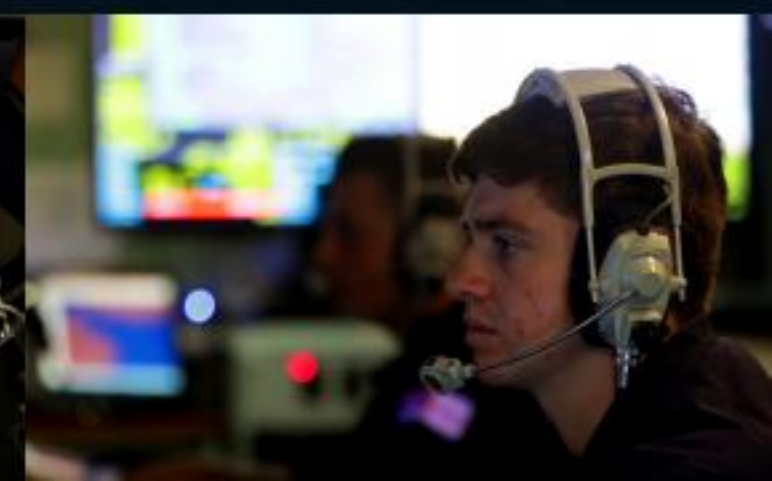
The ship's company not only reached their target, they smashed through it and doubled the distance to reach 1,476 miles – the equivalent of travelling from John O'Groats to Land's End and half way back again.

While in the Med Monmouth also carried out a winning exercise with a patrol vessel from the Cyprus National Guard.

Monmouth was expected to return to Plymouth in time for Christmas.



● Below, from left, HMS Monmouth fires her 4.5in gun; ground crew of 205 Flight prepare Monmouth's Wildcat; sailors in the ship's operations room; AB(WS) Jamie McGregor monitors air traffic



825's eagle eyes help yachtsman

NAVAL fliers and their training ship helped a British yachtsman when his boat was damaged by storms in the Bay of Biscay.

Wildcat helicopters from 825 Naval Air Squadron were scrambled from RFA Argus after an SOS was received from the Takita which had lost its mast as it headed to Britain from the Azores.

The fliers found nothing at the spot where the yacht was reported and then began a systematic search of the Atlantic where the strong winds and heavy seas might have carried the stricken vessel – or its sole crewman if he'd abandoned the Takita.

It was on the third sweep of the search that the aircrew spied the 30ft boat without its mast but still with its master.

"It was absolutely extraordinary that the yacht was sighted considering the sea state, the size of the vessel, its white hull and that it was in the swell troughs for most of the time," said Observer Lt Cdr Chris Grey.

The broken mast had also carried away the radio transmitter which made communications difficult but it was clear that though damaged, Takita was still seaworthy.

She rendezvoused with the Argus, whose crew passed over jerrycans filled with fuel so the yacht could reach Brest in France for emergency repairs.

Argus was being used by 825 Squadron to give trainee pilots, observers and ground crew experience of flying and maintaining the Fleet Air Arm's newest helicopter at sea.

Delving into Gulf secrets

BRITISH and US divers plunged into the Gulf to learn the secrets of mines for the benefit of the world's navies.

Typically when a mine is found it's disposed of – detonated safely using a trigger charge either placed by the Seafox robot submersible or by divers. Ka-boom.

But if a minehunter comes across a new type of mine, those involved in the delicate art of bomb disposal want to know what makes it tick – and how to neutralise it; a 'bible' of mines, homemade bombs, improvised explosive devices and so on is maintained so RN, RAF and Army disposal experts and minehunter crews are not caught off-guard.

That was the premise behind the combined Mine Identification and Exploitation Exercise (MIE-EX) – locate and identify an underwater device, then safely recover it to a ship to understand its inner workings.

Jumping into the balmy waters of the Gulf – the sea temperature was still around 30°C – on behalf of the UK were the specialists of Fleet Diving Unit 3.

Normally based at Horsea Island in Portsmouth Harbour, the unit deploys around the world whenever there's a mine threat against British shipping.

Joining the Brits on the seabed were the Americans of Task Force 56.1 – the US Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal / Expeditionary Diving and Salvage.

"The biggest 'take-aways' and lessons were first how we operated together, both as individual units and together as a wider task group and, second, we were able to prove how we would recover a mine to a ship and then exploit it for further use," said Lt Cdr Alasdair Magill, Officer in Charge of FDU3.



Place in Heaven for HMS Severn

APPLAUSE rippled through the streets of the Welsh city of Newport as locals had a final opportunity to thank the men and women of HMS Severn for their service at home and abroad.

For the last time, the sailors of the patrol ship/fishery protection vessel pounded the tarmac of the South Wales port – a last goodbye before the Portsmouth-based paid off a few days later.

The nature of fishery protection duties, with crew changes every fortnight or so in ports up and down the land – not just traditional naval bases – means that Severn has berthed in Newport on 15 occasions in just 14 years, far more frequently than most vessels get to visit the place which bestows its highest civic honour on them: Freedom of the City, permitting sailors to march the streets in full order, led by an armed Guard of Honour and a Colours party carrying the freedom scroll.

More than a thousand people took time out of a busy Saturday to line main city centre streets. It reinforced the bond between ship and city, Severn's 13th and final CO Lt Cdr Hugh Harris said, a bond broken with a heavy heart.

"The relationship between HMS Severn, her ship's company and Newport has always been very strong – Severn could not have had a more welcoming and supportive home town," he told locals.

"I have been touched by the warmth of welcome that we have received."

As a lasting reminder of the bond of friendship between city and ship, Severn's bell is being loaned to the local council for display in the Civic Centre.

After a brief last fishery patrol – no.315 – Severn entered Portsmouth for the final time under the White Ensign, flying a traditional, long, thin decommissioning pennant ahead of the formal act of leaving the RN.

That act was blessed by glorious autumn weather

as friends, families, VIPs and affiliates gathered on South Railway Jetty for a ceremony celebrating the ship's service.

It was an occasion, Lt Cdr Harris, filled with "mixed emotions". He continued: "There's a huge amount of pride and a little bit of sadness because she's served the Navy and the nation very well over the past 14 years."

"Barring a short stint in the Caribbean, Severn has been on duty for 320 days of each year on patrol in British waters."

That stint in Caribbean waters – Severn was the first of the class to smash the chain which tied her to the mother country – probably accounted for most of the 26 countries the ship called on during 66 foreign visits... and added substantially to the ship's mileage, clocked at 604,450 nautical miles (just under 700,000 statute miles... or enough to the moon and back one and a half times).

During the final 12 months of her active career, in addition to her fishery responsibilities, Severn escorted a Russian landing ship and Chinese task group through the English Channel, opened her doors to the public at the Belfast Titanic Maritime and Weymouth Seafood Festivals, taken part in numerous navigation training courses and an assessment exercise for the Royal Navy's submarine commanders' course.

Her crew now move across to Severn's older sister Tyne, taking charge of her for six months, before moving aboard HMS Medway which was formally named on the Clyde last month.

A bottle of Chatham-made Dockyard Gin smashed against the bow of the 2,000-tonne warship, at BAE's Scotstoun yard by sponsor Lady Fallon, whose husband is the former Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon.

Medway is due in service by 2019, after HMS Forth (now on trials) with Trent, Tamar and Spey following in their wake.

Divers deal with WW1 killer shells

THIS is a potential killer – a relic of man's inhumanity to fellow man.

Navy divers found a Great War killer at the bottom of a lake when they recovered mustard gas bombs.

A seven-strong team of specialists from Southern Diving Unit 2 in Portsmouth spent eight days in woodland outside the village of Woodhall Spa, southeast of Lincoln, after canisters containing the potentially deadly gas were found by the public.

After using sonar to map Stixwould Lake, the divers had to don chemical suits before plunging into the murky waters to recover ten 6lb chemical bombs. They spent more than three hours scouring the lake bed.

The bombs were subsequently handed over to Lincolnshire Police, who are investigating how they came to be at the beauty spot – once the site of RAF Woodhall Spa, a wartime bomber base used by the legendary Dambusters, 617 Squadron.

Today it's popular with scout troops and walkers; a pair of bottle diggers

found two shells containing the gas; disturbed, the noxious substance inflicted minor burns and caused them respiratory problems requiring hospital treatment.

Their unlucky find prompted a massive response from the authorities – nearly two dozen agencies were involved in all, including the Horsea Island divers who, usually, only deal with unexploded/unsafe ordnance in the sea or on the shore.

"It was a bit of a mission," said PO(D) 'Chuck' Norris. "With reports of other people suffering from mustard agent poisoning, full bio-hazard precautions were taken – diving in a chemical environment wearing cumbersome personal protection equipment, then undergoing full decontamination at every stage."

"The bombs themselves were British and well over 70 years old – the UK no longer uses chemical or biological weapons."

Mustard gas shells were first used by the Germans 100 years ago in a bid to stop the British advance

during the Third Battle of Ypres (aka Passchendaele).

Despite the name, the gas has a strong smell of garlic, and its effects were not always immediate. It could burn skin badly, cause breathing problems, dreadful chemical blisters and frequently kill.

Having been first used by the Germans, the Allies too produced the gas and used it extensively during the final 12 months of WW1.

Chemical warfare was outlawed by the Geneva Convention in 1925, but countries, including Britain, continued to stockpile weapons such as mustard gas up to the end of World War 2. Saddam Hussein used the substance repeatedly in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

As for the Portsmouth-based divers, the unusual find in Lincolnshire came at the same time as more regular tasks, dealing with old ordnance like a dummy torpedo speared by an anchor in Portland.



Squeezy does it

THEY say big is better, but sometimes being small has its advantages.

The crew of HMS Pembroke shaved a day off their journey east towards the Black Sea with a NATO task group by squeezing through one of the modern man-made wonders in the ancient world.

The four-mile-long Corinth Canal splits the isthmus to the west of Athens, saving a 430-mile journey – or over 28 hours' sailing at the minehunter's top speed of 15kts – around the Peloponnese.

"It's amazing where you can take minehunters," enthused Sub Lt Alexander Pethybridge, Pembroke's navigator, who planned the tricky passage. "It was a great day and offered spectacular sights."

Like sheer cliffs rising 300ft in places with just 11ft clearance on either side of the Sandown-class ship at sea level – drawing a sizeable number of 'goofers' on the Faslane-based ship's forecabin, smartphones at the ready for snaps and selfies.

Pembroke is a fairly new addition to NATO's Mediterranean-focused Mine Counter-measures Group 1 having joined the force in Vlore in Albania before sailing with it for Greece and beyond.

In charge of the force is survey ship HMS Enterprise, home to

the RN-led NATO staff for the duration of Britain's tenure of command of the group.

And while Pembroke, Italian minehunter ITS Crotone and Turkey's TCG Edremit all took the short-cut through the 125-year-old canal, Enterprise had to take the long way around like most modern shipping.

In theory, the survey vessel can fit down the canal... with 18in to spare either side and six feet beneath the keel... but the clearance distance is a bit too close to the limit to risk...

The force – now joined by Romanian minesweeper ROS Lt Lupu Dinescu – is now back in the central Med after the short foray into the Black Sea.

For FOST read FORST

The RN's ultimate trainers hosted their Irish counterparts to compare the way they prepare sailors for front-line duties.

The MPV arm of the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation based at Faslane readies sailors from small ships – minehunters, River-class patrol ships and P2000 patrol boats – for the rigours they might face in the real world.

Fleet Operations Readiness Standards and Training do the same for the Irish Defence Forces (Navy).

Its head, Cdr Ken Minchane, and his deputy, Lt Cdr David

Fleming, crossed the Irish Sea for the first joint discussion on small-ship training in four years, covering everything from the electronic chart system WECDIS, fire-fighting, force protection and seamanship.

The Irish Navy has three Samuel Beckett-class vessels – similar to the five new River-class patrol ships joining the RN over the next two years – so the MPV team are hoping to pay a reciprocal visit to Ireland in early 2018.

Before then, there's preparing two minehunter crews for Gulf duties in the latest roulement of ship's companies, a visit from the Saudis (who operate Sandown-class hunters) and a visit to HMS Clyde in the Falklands as part of her periodical training package.





Picture: AB Belinda Alker

Perfect exit

Second phase of trials completed

LOOK, she's moving, a bystander shouted as crowds gathered at Gunwharf to watch HMS Queen Elizabeth leave Portsmouth Harbour for the first time.

Around 2,000 spectators gathered at the railings at Gunwharf, crowded onto Spice Island, and lined the ramparts near the Round Tower to see the 65,000-tonne leviathan make her maiden journey from her home port.

A couple of hundred people – including a hardy few in their swimming gear – were also on the beach in front of the Hot Walls to watch the Royal Navy's future flagship sail for her latest set of trials.

It took the carrier a good 20 minutes to complete the tricky manoeuvre of turning as she moved, crab-like, from her berth at Princess Royal Jetty.

And then QE appeared to glide gracefully through the water towards the narrow harbour entrance. A line was attached from the carrier to Serco's newest tug SD Tempest as she led the warship south.

The line up was completed by tugs Bountiful, Christina, Independent, Indulgent and Suzanne, along with the Ministry of Defence Police launch and marine unit Ribs.

Dave and Pat Palmer, who were visiting Gunwharf from

their home in Southampton, stopped trawling the shops to watch the proceedings.

"I didn't realise she was sailing today – big, isn't she?" said Dave.

Ian Lynham, who made the journey down from his home near Guildford, said: "I wasn't able to be here to see her arrive so was glad I was able to make it today. The ship is some sight."

The carrier, which arrived at her home port in August, remained at sea for three weeks.

During her latest trials HMS Queen Elizabeth was visited by the new Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, who said: "This magnificent ship will be a leading force fighting to protect the values of the UK and our allies."

Her first phase of sea trials, conducted earlier this year, demonstrated the platform stability and manoeuvrability.

Commanding Officer Capt Jerry Kyd said: "She was stable and strong, which is important for aviation operations from an aircraft carrier flight deck."

"Very quickly we were able to run her at full power and she performed extremely well."

The carrier is the biggest and most advanced warship to have ever been built by the Royal

Navy, and can accommodate up to 1,600 personnel, which would include a full air crew, but also provides space for embarked personnel such as Royal Marines.

HMS Prince of Wales, the second of the fleet's new aircraft carriers, is in the final phases of construction in Rosyth Dockyard and is expected to be floated out of its giant dock next spring.

To date, construction of the two ships has devoured 51 million man hours – enough to keep one person occupied for more than 5,800 years.

The carrier returned to Portsmouth in time for her commissioning ceremony, details of which will be in next month's edition.

As HMS Queen Elizabeth disappeared from sight, the Wightlink car ferry St Clare headed out of her mooring and the Gosport ferry recommenced crossings.

All was back to normal in the harbour.

The crowds at Gunwharf headed back towards the shops and restaurants.

"With all these people around, I do hope we can get a table in the pub for lunch," said Moira, who had arrived with some friends unaware of the sailing.



Pictures: LPhoto Kyle Heller



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Dragon boat driver Sally honoured

LS Sally Hughes proudly shows off the Queen's Gallantry Medal – presented by Her Majesty in person at Buckingham Palace – in recognition of the HMS Dragon sailor's brave and skilful rescue of 14 crew of a stricken racing yacht.

The 28-year-old was serving aboard the Type 45 destroyer when Dragon was diverted to assist the Clyde Challenger yacht, which had lost a mast in 18ft seas 500 miles south west of Land's End in February.

LS Hughes, who joined the Royal Navy in 2009, was charged with driving the ship's sea boat, a 24ft Pacific rigid inflatable boat.

The Clyde Challenger was taking on water and drifting further out into the worsening Atlantic storm when HMS Dragon arrived on the scene.

In the challenging sea state the sea boat and the yacht were regularly lost from HMS Dragon's view as they dipped into the huge Atlantic swell, with the 50mph winds making it even more difficult.

Despite the danger to herself and her crewmate, LS Hughes persisted with the rescue and made 13 approaches over a gruelling two-hour period to lift the crew off the stricken yacht and ferry them back to the safety of HMS Dragon.

During one of the trips, the sea boat was swung into the side of Dragon by the high seas and the force of the impact punctured the boat and injured LS Hughes' arm; she elected to simply switch to the reserve sea boat and continue to rescue.

The 28-year-old said: "I am humbled to have been recognised for my actions during the rescue."

"I was doing my job in challenging conditions and was but part of a team effort in rescuing the sailors; an action I would hope anyone would do if I were ever to be in a similar situation."

"There was no place for fear during this rescue. I had been trained to drive the sea boat and whilst the conditions I experienced were significantly more challenging than I had dealt with before I applied my knowledge to achieve the end result."

Clyde Challenger's co-skipper Ben Turner said: "I can truly say Sally and her two crew members drove that boat brilliantly and got us off in atrocious conditions. BZ to her and all her crew and Dragon."

One of the first to be rescued from the yacht was Ann Graham, who said: "I will forever be grateful to Sally and her two crewmates who lifted me off the gunwales and onto the rib."

"I sat beside Sally as she expertly guided us back to HMS Dragon under horrendous conditions."

Picture: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban, DDC



Flag days

A MERLIN and Bagger lift off from the dummy deck at Culdrose almost in tandem – just two movements during a hectic ten days at the Cornish air station.

Fliers squeezed in more than 600 hours of fast jet, turbo-prop and whirlybird action as the base pretended to be a living, breathing and fighting aircraft carrier.

Exercise Kernow – Cornish for 'Cornwall' – Flag turned Culdrose into fictional flat-top HMS Seahawk.

The base – which has billed itself as 'HMS Queen Elizabeth on land' in preparation for the new carrier entering service – took that concept to the next level.

In true gunboat diplomacy style, carrier Seahawk was sent to help the people of Redrivia, threatened by its tubthumping neighbour Camberland.

Squadrons and many air station personnel treated the Helston base as a 'stone carrier' – eating, sleeping and working within the confines of the base.

All Culdrose's aircraft and personnel have a part to play in training sailors to serve aboard Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales: flight deck handlers, fire-fighters, flight safety equipment experts, helicopter pilots and observers and fast jet pilots.

The Merlin Mk2s are the guardians of the new

flagships against submarine attack; the veteran Bagger Sea Kings are the forerunners of Merlin Crowsnest which arrives next year and will act as the carriers' long-range eyes, looking for incoming enemy aircraft and surface ships. Hawks of 736 NAS train fast-jet pilots and King Air Avengers feed the fleet with observers.

All aircraft lifted off from Culdrose to simulate the mass deployment of aircraft on to a carrier... and a short while later touched down on the 'flight deck' of 'HMS Seahawk', the beginning of round-the-clock operations which will see aircrew collectively clock up more than 600 hours' flying (when typically they'd only perhaps get in eight to ten hours individually).

"For us to be able to deliver our part in carrier strike, we need to make sure that we have the right skill and mind-sets for aircraft carrier operations," explained Capt Dan Stembridge, Culdrose's Commanding Officer.

"Kernow Flag is the perfect way to prove that we're 'carrier-ready': flying over 600 hours around the clock, in five different aircraft types, operating with ships, submarines and other aircraft to prove our carrier abilities."

"Culdrose will be operating just like we will do on board HMS Queen Elizabeth. The exercise will test the whole air station from engineering to the supply chain, right up to the front end of flying."

All aboard the ORC Royal in Wales

THE peace and tranquillity of rural Wales was shattered by the guardians of the nation's ultimate weapon as they honed their gunnery skills.

Royal Marines of 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group's Boat Troop made the 800-mile round trip from Faslane to the Castlemartin ranges to practise with their General Purpose Machine Guns on land and at sea.

It's the duty of 43 Commando to protect the nation's nuclear deterrent when the Vanguard class of submarines are in harbour at Faslane and when the leviathans are on the surface departing from or returning to base.

Together with MOD police in their various craft, the men of 43's Boat Troop form a ring of steel around the V-boats, using fast ORC patrol craft and three 33kt Island-class patrol boats (Mull, Rona, Eorsa) – all armed with GPMGs.

Live firing opportunities in the confines of Faslane and the Clyde estuary are few and far between, but there are far fewer restrictions in the wilds of Pembrokeshire and the Angle Peninsula.

The 5,900 acres of the Castlemartin ranges, five miles



southwest of Pembroke, make the perfect playground – they're about one third the size of Plymouth – and are regularly used by the Corps for live shoots, including the Boat Troop's annual Ocean Fire, spread over three weeks.

Seventeen men from 43 took to the land first, starting with basics on the shooting range, then moving on to trailers to form a formidable gunline of machine-guns, spewing out 7.62mm bullets at two-and-a-half-times the speed of sound at the rate of 750 rounds a minute.

And then they did the same from the ORCs buzzing around in the Bristol Channel at up to 39kts (over 40mph), aiming at targets on land and on the water – made all the more challenging by the fact that the sea was churned up by the tail end of what was Hurricane Irma... which caused devastation across the Caribbean.

Picture: LPhot Will Haigh, FRPU North

Tide marks Solent debut

THREE tugs help the largest support ship in the British military inventory past Round Tower and into Portsmouth for the first time.

RFA Tidespring arrived in the home of the surface fleet in time to be formally embraced by the Naval Service; a service of dedication (there are no commissionings in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary) was due to be held on November 27.

Tidespring is the first of four next-generation tankers/support vessels built to sustain the Fleet for the coming quarter of a century

and beyond; they'll be the logistical backbone of future carrier/amphibious task groups.

Two have been delivered to the UK, a third is on sea trials and the last one (Tidesurge) is in the final stages of being kitted out.

Since receiving military kit in Falmouth to add to the South Korean-built hull, Tidespring has been conducting sea trials around the UK, climaxing with her maiden replenishment at sea, pumping some black gold into the tanks of frigate HMS Sutherland in the Channel just hours before entering Portsmouth.

Picture: LPhot Barry Swainsbury



Merlin saves Arthur's tomb from erosion

READERS are always asking us: do you have any images of green Merlins lifting giant red and white sacks around one of Somerset's most mystical sites?

Well, today, we can answer resoundingly 'yes'... thanks to the good folk of 846 Naval Air Squadron offering a helping hand at Glastonbury Tor.

The iconic Somerset hill/landmark – supposed last resting place of King Arthur and Guinevere – is not just a useful navigational marker for Merlins and Wildcats returning to nearby RNAS Yeovilton... it's also popular with hundreds of thousands of tourists who clamber up the 518ft to the summit to catch the stunning views and admire the ruins of St Michael's Church.

Unfortunately those same tourists are beginning to erode the very hill they love to climb, so the National Trust needed to reinforce the hill by treading stones into the earth.

So many tonnes were needed that wheelbarrows up and down the hill wasn't an option, so the trust turned to the Commando Helicopter Force and its heavy-lifting helicopters.

Enter one Merlin piloted by Lts Fred Durrant and Tristan Rowan, with Royal Marines aircrewmen Sgt Graham Smith and Sgt Julian Marchant in the back of the cab.

The Merlin lifted nearly 40 tonnes of stone and deposited them on the Tor – members of the Mobile Air Operations Team were at the top of the hill to guide the aircraft safely in, not least because its powerful downdraft is equivalent to winds of over 70mph.

Once the stones had been deposited on the Tor and the Merlin withdrew, National Trust ranger Rebekah West and a team of volunteers were on hand to un-bag and to begin to spread them.

Due to the proximity of onlookers and nearby dwellings and buildings, 846 NAS' XO Lt Cdr Tom Cackett was present throughout, ensuring the safety aspects of the flying.

"It's a rare privilege to carry out community-related tasks – especially on such an iconic site that has such meaning to many in Somerset, especially those who work and fly out of Yeovilton," he said.

"The Commando Helicopter Force has always had a special place for Glastonbury and its Tor. Whenever there is an event to celebrate, the Tor is the main landmark on the flypast route and we always dip a wing in salute."

"To work on a project with Rebekah and the national institution that is the National Trust has been a real pleasure."

Wow. We got through that story without any dodgy puns like 'tor of duty', 'tor de force' or 'tor blimey'...

Picture: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, RNPOTY





Same ship, different year

FOR the second time in 18 months, HMS Somerset found herself in the Moray Firth, keeping an eye on the Russian destroyer Vice Admiral Kulakov.

The Fleet Ready Escort detected and monitored the movements of the Russian vessel – plus her supporting tanker – as the Kulakov (pictured here in choppy seas a few hundred yards ahead of Somerset) sailed back towards her motherland from the Mediterranean.

The Plymouth-based Type 23 had been conducting sonar trials when she received the call to locate and shadow the Russian pair.

Somerset arrived in the Moray Firth and escorted the Russians through UK waters and north along the coast of Norway before returning to her original task.

In March last year, the frigate did exactly the same when the Kulakov disrupted Somerset's Easter, sheltering 20 miles off the Scottish coast.

"As with all Royal Navy ships operating in UK waters, HMS Somerset was at a high state of alert to deal with any security task such as this," said Cdr Tim Berry, Somerset's CO.

"Monitoring non-NATO warships through UK territorial waters is part of what the Royal Navy does all year round to keep Britain safe."

Welcome aboard the Fighting Clan, Ma'am

THERE are birthday guests and there are birthday guests...

Dropping in on Her Majesty's Ship Sutherland for the frigate's 20th birthday was... Her Majesty, who spent the day aboard the Fighting Clan in London's Docklands for a never-to-be-forgotten anniversary.

The Devonport-based frigate invited supporters, affiliates and former commanding officers to join CO Cdr Andrew Canale and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones in celebrating Sutherland's deeds over the past couple of decades during a short break in the capital.

Sutherland has spent much of the past 12 months in and around the UK as the Fleet Ready Escort/Towed Array Patrol Ship, responding to the presence of foreign warships and submarines.

Most recently, she's completed Operational Sea Training off Plymouth ahead of a front-line deployment in 2018.

"This has been a very special day for all who have served in HMS Sutherland and to our affiliates who have supported us over the past 20 years," said Cdr Canale.

"Everyone who's served on Sutherland has much to be proud of and we are honoured to be able to mark this occasion in the presence of the Queen."

The flight deck was the focus



of much of the visit from a demonstration of the ship's fire-fighting team in action to a rather colourful unique ship's company photograph as the Queen posed with Admiral Jones, sailors in No.1s, chefs in their whites and emergency parties in their surcoats beneath a colourful array of flags – Sutherland was, naturally, dressed overall for the occasion.

Pushed into a corner of the flight deck for the photograph was the Wildcat helicopter flown by Lts Oliver Brooksbank and James Hume, just back from humanitarian work in the Caribbean helping victims of the

recent wave of hurricanes; they outlined some of the missions flown and helped deliver to the British Virgin and Turks and Caicos Islands.

While the fliers were running through the deeds of the military half a world away, Sutherland's team of chefs and stewards were preparing a meal to remember for 150 guests in all.

For the record, the royal meal began with gravadlax of wild Highland salmon served on a burnt apple relish and garnished with finely-shaved beetroot slices.

Next: medallions of haggis-stuffed chicken breast served with fondant potatoes, asparagus

battens, roast carrots and a three-cheese sauce.

And finally: dark chocolate and raspberry bavares served with a homemade shortbread crumb, summer fruit gel and dark chocolate shard.

So, basically, regular lunchtime fare on a Type 23...

"It's rare for us to get the opportunity to practise our fine-dining skills, so we've enjoyed having the chance to prepare today's meal," said LCh Rory Fraser, toiling in the galley.

"We certainly practised a lot, so fingers crossed everything came together as we wanted."

Logistics officer Lt Cdr David Bell said his chefs and stewards had "performed brilliantly to get everything ready."

He continued: "Not only have they prepared a meal fit for the Queen, they have also catered for 150 guests and families. It's even more impressive when you think that the majority of the preparation was done when we were still at sea."

As well as a satiated stomach, the Queen left the ship with a framed photograph of Sutherland with new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, a scene captured by the crew of the Merlin helicopter then assigned to the frigate; the Fighting Clan was the very first RN vessel to act as the future flagship's escort.

Picture: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban, DDC

Divers deal with invasion weapon

DIVERS safely blew up a 'self-destruct bomb' designed to prevent HMS Daedalus falling into German hands during the Battle of Britain.

A bomb disposal team from Southern Diving Unit 2 were called to the former naval airbase after a six-metre-long 'Canadian pipe bomb' was discovered by builders working on a new electricity sub station near the Stubbington side of the site.

Roads were sealed off and some homes evacuated while the bomb disposal experts set about recovering the bomb, using metal detectors and ground penetrating radar, working through the night to safely remove what turned out to be a six-metre section, before disposing of it on a range.

The mines were originally laid around the airfield at the height of the Battle of Britain in the summer of 1940 when the country was threatened with Nazi invasion.

The idea was to detonate the pipe bombs if Germans stormed, or even occupied, the air station. The explosions would render the entire base and its infrastructure useless – and take the Nazi attackers with them.

According to official records more than 250 sections of pipe bomb – each about 18 metres long and containing 55kg of explosive (slightly more than a modern Stingray torpedo) – were laid around Daedalus.

The mines should have been removed at the end of World War 2, but many at the Lee-on-the-Solent base were evidently forgotten because 20 were found during construction work on the site a decade ago.

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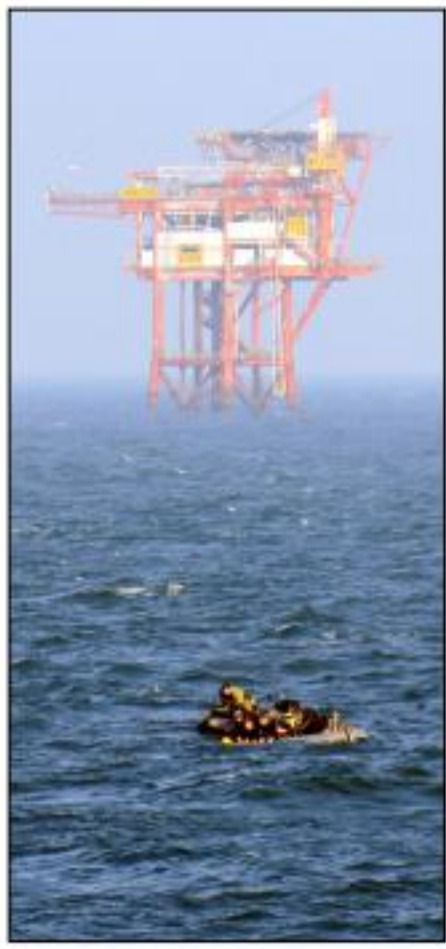
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Cattistock in North Sea bomb drama

IN CHALLENGING autumn seas divers from HMS Cattistock toil to move a German wartime bomb to safety – just a few hundred yards from a North Sea gas rig.

HMS Cattistock and a team of specially-embarked divers headed to the Indefatigable gas field – about 50 miles off Cromer – where a Dutch trawler hauled the 500lb bomb aboard after it was caught in fishing nets.

The fishermen gently lowered the device back down to the sea bed before reporting their discovery to authorities but the bomb ended up dangerously close to a major North Sea gas pipe.

When the Portsmouth-based minehunter arrived on the scene, divers from Southern Diving Unit 2 located the aged ordnance and lifted it to the surface, before moving it a mile, fixing a small explosive charge to it and sending it safely to kingdom come.

Fortunately due to its age, the bomb was discovered to be inert and no longer a threat – but the divers were not to know that when the operation began.

"The proximity of the bomb to the gas pipeline clearly presented a significant risk but we were able to deal with the situation quickly," explained PO(D) Lee Sullivan of SDU2.

"We safely removed the bomb from the pipeline area, and then carried out a controlled demolition. Fortunately the bomb turned out to be inert, meaning it wouldn't have posed a danger – but there was no way of knowing this until we destroyed it."

HMS Cattistock reached the vicinity of the unmanned gas rig – operated by Anglo-French energy firm Perenco – within 24 hours of the call and swiftly located the bomb using her Seafox underwater robot.

The SDU2 team who inspected the bomb believe it was dropped by the Luftwaffe.

"This is exactly the sort of task Cattistock and the Royal Navy's expert divers are trained to do and we worked together to deliver a safe outcome," said the Hunt-class ship's Commanding Officer Cdr Charles Wheen.

"I'm very proud of the team involved and how they managed to resolve this potentially-dangerous situation."

"It's a great example of the importance of good teamwork, but I hope it also serves as a reassuring demonstration of how the Royal Navy stands by around the clock to secure the seas around Britain."

Are you experienced? Yes, very...

A SEA King helicopter which first flew as Jimi Hendrix took to the stage at the legendary Isle of Wight Festival has clocked up a remarkable 77 weeks in the skies.

XV671 – currently keeping an eye on potential drug traffickers, gun runners and terrorists in the Middle East – has clocked up 13,000 hours flying. That's the equivalent of just over 77 weeks... or a year and five months.

Of something like 120 Sea Kings built for the Royal Navy from the late 1960s through to the late 1980s, fewer than a dozen are still in service – all with 849 Naval Air Squadron, based at Culdrose in South-West Cornwall.

XV671 was among the first three dozen Sea Kings handed over to the Royal Navy, delivered to the Fleet Air Arm in the last week of August 1970... as revellers gathered for the third and final Isle of Wight festival, headlined by Jimi Hendrix (who would be dead within a month of a drug overdose).

Although the airframe dates back nearly half a century, the radar and sensors inside the vintage helicopter are bang up to date, allowing the crew to track not merely incoming enemy aircraft and missiles, but follow

the movements of vehicles on the ground.

The Bagger – as this version of the Sea King is known due to its distinctive black sack containing the radar – proved its worth extensively in Iraq and Afghanistan, tracking enemy armour over the former country and following the movements of terrorists in the latter.

Today the aircraft is one of two Sea Kings in Palembang Flight, supporting the work of both the Royal Navy's Gulf headquarters in Bahrain and the international Combined Maritime Forces who patrol the Gulf and Indian Ocean.

The helicopter was already 29 years old when the youngest engineer on the flight, Jake Rudd, 18, was born. On the very day of his birth, XV671 carried out a 50-minute flight from Culdrose – bringing her close to 8,000 flying hours.

Nearly two decades later, Jake has followed his father's footsteps as a Sea King technician (he maintained other variants of the long-serving helicopter throughout the 1990s and continues to serve at Culdrose today) and joined colleagues for a sort of 'birthday party' for the veteran whirlybird.

"The fact that this airframe has reached 13,000 flying hours is testament not only to the



robust design and resilience of the Sea King but mainly to the outstanding engineering personnel and vigorous maintenance procedures we have in the Fleet Air Arm," said Lt Cdr Mark Rose, Palembang Flight's commander.

"It is quite astounding that this aircraft is 47 years old and still safely flying routine operations today."

XV671 actually started out as a submarine hunter before being turned into an airborne

early warning helicopter in 1984 and, in 2002, the most recent version, Airborne Surveillance and Control. It's seen extensive service aboard UK aircraft carriers, and especially in Iraq and Afghanistan.

She and her sister ZA126 – a whole ten years younger – are next lined up to train fast jet pilots, with crew directing fighters during air-to-air combat and, using skills honed over Helmand, directing aircraft on to targets on the ground.

High flyers rewarded

A PILOT who dropped over five tonnes of high explosive on Daesh fighters and an instructor who saved his student and his jet when the oxygen supply failed have been recognised at the first ever 'Oscars' for British naval aviators.

Sixteen men and women who toil behind the scenes – or on the front line – on behalf of the Fleet Air Arm, the wings of the Royal Navy, were invited to the Houses of Parliament for the Service's first 'achievement awards'.

Acting PO(SE) Matthew 'Willow' Williams headed to London to pick up a commendation for his efforts to improve safety on the Hawk training squadron, 736 NAS, at Culdrose.

He left the Palace of Westminster with said commendation... and as Fleet Air Arm Sailor of the Year.

"There were a lot of people nominated who have done an excellent job this year so to be selected from the group was amazing," said the 32-year-old from Cheshire (pictured above right with some of the equipment for which he is responsible).

"This is something that I will never forget and I hope that it inspires others to work towards being in a position for this award next year."

"Working in the Fleet Air Arm is challenging but working with a committed team we can achieve our end goal."

Lt Chris – we're not using his surname for security reasons – is one of several British pilots serving with US squadrons to gain fast jet/carrier/combat experience.

He completed a tour of duty flying F/A-18C Hornets from the deck of carrier USS Dwight D Eisenhower, completing 17 day and night missions over Iraq and Syria, during which ground troops called for support on two dozen occasions. Chris responded by unleashing 12,500lbs of ordnance on enemy positions as he clocked up 119 hours on the front line.

He received the Cobham Trophy from the head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Keith Blount, for his "outstanding achievements" and his contribution to naval aviation



over the past 12 months.

Former Harrier pilot Lt Cdr Chris Roy was instructing a student high above Mississippi in a two-seat Goshawk trainer – similar to the Hawk jets flown by the Red Arrows – when the oxygen supply failed.

Despite suffering from hypoxia Chris took the Goshawk's controls and succeeded in bringing it back to Meridian Naval Air Station, saving the aircraft, his unresponsive student and himself as the jet's air supply finally ran out. He earns a 'Green Endorsement' – one of the highest accolades in aviation for safety.

Lt Cdr Neil Wiseman and Lt William Thornton of 815 NAS also receive a Green Endorsement for the safe return of their Wildcat helicopter when one of its engines failed after a three-hour patrol over the Indian Ocean. Unable to return to their frigate HMS Monmouth, the aircrew succeeded in safely landing the aircraft on the deck of support ship RFA Fort Victoria.

Lt Cdr Chris Coles was presented with The Queen Elizabeth Aviation Sword for his input into the design and operation of the new aircraft carrier such that the ship was operating helicopters within hours of sailing for the first time.

More than 35 years' experience with the Baggers – the airborne early warning and now airborne surveillance and control helicopters – and the passion with which he passes that knowledge on to trainee crews on 849 NAS at Culdrose, leading to improved front-line results from the Navy's eyes in the sky on operations around the globe,

earned Lt Cdr Richard Lewis the Robert Sandison Trophy.

Commendations were also presented to CPO Kevin Stammers for work with data management/assessment involving Merlin Mk2 helicopters; CPO Damian Marks oversaw maintenance of HMS Portland's Lynx helicopter during a nine-month deployment – chiefly three engine changes over the Christmas period, when most of his shipmates were thinking of home and loved ones; and civilian Caroline McTavish for helping to bridge the gap between military and civilian personnel involved in the new aircraft carrier programme.

LAET James Rogers of 824 NAS, NA(SE) Jason Panayiotou of 736 NAS, Logs (SC) Greg Jones of RNAS Culdrose and LAET Tina Keel based at Yeovilton earned Live your Life awards. James is a linchpin at Culdrose's sub-aqua club, in particular organising adventurous training diving expedition to Ascension Island; Jason pulled out all the stops when his squadron moved buildings unexpectedly to ensure everything in his survival equipment department was ready; Greg has been instrumental in bringing both fun and a sense of ethos to junior ratings at the Cornish air base, from reinvigorating the bar to

introducing a mess function, Boy Cornwell Night; and Tina plays a key role by day in ensuring Yeovilton and its 5,000 military/civilian staff runs smoothly by day, and in her spare time is secretary/treasurer of the RN Motorcycle Club... and designed the cycling jerseys worn by the CHF Cycle Club.

Culdrose's senior clubz, CPO(PTI) Donna Chapman, receives a Special Achievement in Leadership Award for breathing fresh life into the gym and recreational facilities on the site, and encouraged her team of physical trainers to work with local schools, mentoring and coaching youngsters.

Two awards were presented on behalf of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. The Masters Medal went to Cdr Matt Grindon for his life-saving actions as captain of a Gazelle helicopter when a Yak-52 crashed into a field.

And finally, Cdr Ian Fitter – until recently XO of Culdrose – collected the Cumberbatch Trophy for his commitment to safe flying. Dubbed the Fleet Air Arm's 'Mr Flight Safety', his dedication has meant that not a single naval aviator has been killed in an accident since 2004, while the number of accidents in the service have fallen to previously unheard of levels.

Jets are cleared for ramp

THE UK's F-35B fighter jet is now cleared for take-off from HMS Queen Elizabeth following successful trials using the ski-ramp design featured on the Royal Navy's future flagship.

The UK currently has 12 F-35B jets in the United States where they are being tested ahead of flight trials from the 65,000-tonne carrier next year. Two more aircraft are due to be delivered by the end of the year.

The F-35 Integrated Test Force, which includes five British pilots, has now successfully completed ski-ramp trials. That milestone clears the aircraft for take-off from the deck of the carrier.

There are already 150 UK personnel out in the US working with the state-of-the-art jets, and it has also been revealed that the latest course of UK pilots have just finished their ground school training and are now ready to fly the F-35B at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in South Carolina.

Among those to have graduated from that course are four pilots who started F-35 training straight from their advanced pilot training at RAF Valley, and Wing Cdr John Butcher, who will be the Commanding Officer of 617 Squadron.

The new home of 617 squadron, RAF Marham, continues to build towards the arrival of the jets next year, moving a step closer earlier this month when the runway intersection resurfacing was completed.

617 Squadron will be the first operational British F-35 unit. A second squadron, 809 NAS, is due to stand up in 2023.

The first F-35 flight with the latest software was conducted on one of the UK's F-35Bs at Edwards Air Force Base in California. This software upgrade, technically known as Block 3F, represents the full war-fighting capability the UK F-35s will have at Initial Operating Capability in December 2018.

ROYAL Navy Merlin pilots are to benefit from a £90m-plus investment in a world-leading helicopter simulation centre.

The deal will sustain 70 jobs at the Medium Support Helicopter Aircrew Training Facility based at RAF Benson in South Oxfordshire.

The equipment provides a realistic representation of the operating environments the crews will fly in.

The contract will deliver training for Chinook and Puma aircrews until the Puma's planned out-of-service date.

Training for the Merlin Mk3 will continue there for at least two more years as the RN transitions from the Mk3 to the Mk4 helicopter.

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● From left, HMS Protector worked with a search-and-rescue helicopter; a man overboard exercise; Lts Hannah Boddington and Emma Farley in their fire gear; Protector's sea boats and RIBs



● Above, LMET Shaun 'Dot' Cotton of the recce team during the SOLAS exercise; Below, Marine Engineers Robert Blair and Brendan Hawkins man hoses during machinery breakdown drills



Ice patrol ship now ready for anything

"THERE'S blood on the deck again," complained AB Diver Kieron Dimmock.

Fortunately it was not real blood but the simulated kind used for adding realism to the many damage-control and casualty exercises that have been a daily occurrence for the crew of the Royal Navy's ice patrol ship.

Having completed a successful refit in Cape Town, HMS Protector endured a bumpy transit of nearly 4,000 miles across the South Atlantic to the Falkland Islands.

There she started a busy training package to ensure both ship and crew are ready to embark on work packages in Antarctica.

Seven days of self-training (shakedown) saw Protector conducting a casualty evacuation exercise with the search-and-rescue helicopter from nearby RAF Mount Pleasant Airfield.

She also proved the ship's towing capability for the first time.

"Having the capability to tow adds to the level of assistance that Protector could offer to a vessel in distress," said Alternate Navigator Lt Hannah Boddington.

"As the tourism trade in the region expands, we are seeing increasing numbers of cruise ships without ice strengthened hulls operating in Antarctic waters."

With shakedown complete, the ship welcomed onboard Cdr Marcus Hember and his team from Flag Officer Sea Training to conduct continuation training and assessment as well as providing further opportunities to exercise more of Protector's capabilities.

The ship's survey motor boat, James Caird IV, was launched and surveyed part of Mare Harbour.

Members of the crew also got the chance of a night camping ashore under the expert guidance of Mountain Leader Mne Edward Hill.

A shore party was also landed to conduct a simulated base visit, in preparation for similar visits that will be made to many of the foreign research bases located along the Antarctic Peninsula.

The final validation exercise saw HMS Protector responding to a distress call from the MV Antarctic Cruise which, thanks to the 'laissez faire' attitude of the ship's master - aka FOST navigator Lt Cdr Peter Dargan - had managed to get stuck on an ice pinnacle, resulting in the engine room flooding and fuel leaking into the delicate Antarctic ecosystem.

To add to this they had also managed to strand 80 tourists - members of the resident infantry company - ashore overnight with no food or shelter.

Protector needed to provide teams to assist in two separate locations (as well as ensuring they could still deal with any shipborne emergencies).

This proved a huge challenge for the ship's company of only 62.

"The Falkland Islands weather added to the realism with high winds and snow," said First Lieutenant Lt Cdr Matthew Lindeyer, who had the misfortune of experiencing this first hand when his team endured a very wet sea boat transfer to the stricken vessel (a role taken on by a local tug).

Protector's crew successfully repaired

the vessel's flooded engine room and casualties and passengers ashore were treated and recovered from their 'ordeal'.

During all of this a fire onboard Protector herself was also successfully dealt with.

The ice patrol ship will complete five work packages over the Antarctic summer season, travelling to South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands, the South Shetlands and various locations in and around the Antarctic Peninsula.

During these periods she will undertake hydrographic surveys of the area to improve the safety of navigation, conduct base visits and provide support to UK and foreign research stations as well as assisting the British Antarctic Survey and UK Antarctic Heritage Trust with the study and preservation of this unique part of the world.

Protector was deployed to join efforts to find an Argentine submarine reported missing in the South Atlantic Ocean.

Following a request for assistance from the Argentine Government, the Royal Navy patrol ship immediately changed course from her planned tasking and sailed to join the multinational efforts to find the missing submarine ARA San Juan.

The UK also deployed the Royal Navy's specialist Submarine Parachute Assistance Group to assist with the search efforts, and the Falklands Islands patrol vessel HMS Clyde was returning from South Georgia in order to assist with the search.

The boat was still missing as Navy News went to press.

You can follow HMS Protector's activities on Twitter at [@protector_hms](https://twitter.com/protector_hms)

Words: Lt Cdr Charlie Carver

Pictures: LPhoto Ben Shread



● Above, LMA Dan McKinnon checks the wellbeing of ET Xinyu Liu during an exercise; Below, Leading Chef Sam Tucker checks the firefighting kit ahead of a fire exercise





SOMETIMES the slightest of mishaps or failures can cause the most cataclysmic of tragedies.

The Titanic was done for not by some gigantic gash carving the hull apart over a length of 300ft, but a series of small holes over the same length totalling no more than a dozen square feet – the size of an average office desk.

A rubber seal breaking led to the Space Shuttle Challenger blowing up on launch, killing all seven crew.

And in December 1917, the collision of two merchant ships, travelling at just one knot apiece, caused the (then) greatest man-made explosion in history – whose devastating aftermath was recorded for posterity by cameramen capturing the Allied war effort and can now be found in the archives of the Imperial War Museum.

Impatience, the urgency of war, bad luck and even worse seamanship conspired against the people of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

As the fourth Christmas of the Great War approached with little prospect of peace, the Canadian port remained

a key Allied staging post for shipping moving between the Old World and the New.

At first light on Thursday December 6 1917, the torpedo defences were lifted and traffic resumed.

The freighter Mont Blanc, packed with more than 2,500 tons of explosives, was eager to dock, while the Norwegian merchantman Imo was keen to get under way for New York to pick up supplies for Belgian civilians displaced by the fighting in their homeland.

The two vessels met in the Narrows, the strait between the inner basin and the outer harbour, the prow of the Imo briefly embedded in the bow of the Mont Blanc.

Barrels of benzol – petrol – toppled, burst and spilled their contents over the deck and into the hold.

As the Imo reversed and extracted herself from the Mont Blanc, steel clashed against steel, sparks flew and the benzol ignited, quickly followed by picric acid – used to produce explosives.

It wasn't long before the French crew had first lost control of the fire,

then lost control of their minds and panicked, abandoning ship, rowing ashore and running through the streets warning in their native tongue about impending doom.

How right they were. Twenty minutes after the collision, the flames reached the explosives in the cargo.

The ship disintegrated in an instant, torn apart by a three kiloton blast – about one fifth the strength of the atomic explosion at Hiroshima. A blast wave bulldozed in every direction at three times the speed of sound: factories, wharves, entire streets were flattened, trees and telegraph poles snapped in two. Mont Blanc's main gun was hurled more than three-and-a-half miles, her half-tonne anchor crashed down two miles from the wreck site.

There was not a window pane intact in the city centre. The shattered glass flew through the air like daggers. At least 600 people were blinded or lost an eye because of shards of glass. Arms and legs were shredded, jaws shattered, bodies blown out of buildings and left hanging in tangled

telegraph and telephone wires.

The aftermath of the blast was akin to an earthquake. The 5,000°C heat from the blast caused water in the harbour to vapourise – some Haligonians claimed they could see the harbour bed – and then caused a tsunami with a wall of water up to 60ft high. It swept into the port with such force that it lifted up the Imo and dumped it on the foreshore.

Seven sailors from Royal Navy cruiser HMS Highflyer had taken to a whaler when they saw the Mont Blanc catch fire to effect a rescue. All but one of the men was killed as the freighter exploded. Two would be awarded the Albert Medal for attempting to save lives, though only was still alive to collect it.

Billy Wells, driver of the first motorised fire engine in the city, responded with seven comrades. Their engine, Patricia, got within a few hundred yards of the Mont Blanc before the explosives detonated.

Wells was the engine's sole survivor. The blast tore him from the driver's seat and threw him in the air – his right

hand still clutching the steering wheel.

That was only the beginning of his ordeal, for the wave carried the injured firefighter with a wall of debris through the city streets. He nearly drowned in the tangle of wood and wires – and because his fireman's jacket was used to cover another corpse, rumours of his demise spread. "I guess there wasn't room in hell for me," he observed half a century later.

Upwards of 2,000 people were not so fortunate; the last corpse was not recovered until 1919. More Nova Scotians died in the Halifax explosion than in the killing fields of Flanders.

Some 12,000 buildings, including most of the port and its infrastructure, were deemed beyond repair. It would take 18 months for some semblance of normal life to return to the city, and well into the 1920s before the levelled districts were rebuilt.

■ These photographs (Q 71057 and 71057) are two of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5309.



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● The Princess admires the commemorative stone, accompanied by Cdre Inga Kennedy and Admiral Sir Philip Jones; the Princess talks to Gwyneth Wasley
Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury

Celebrating 100 years of Service

THE Princess Royal attended a service of thanksgiving at Portsmouth Anglican Cathedral to mark the formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) 100 years ago.

Princess Anne, who is Chief Commandant for Women in the Royal Navy, unveiled a commemorative stone after the service in the cathedral grounds.

The commemorative stone, produced by stonemason Robyn Golden-Hann, depicts the unique shapes of four female Naval uniform hats from the past 100 years.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones said: "I'm proud to lead a Royal Navy where women serve as engineers and pilots, divers and submariners; where they have been recognised for their courage under fire and have risen to command fighting ships and major shore establishments. We now look forward to welcoming the first women into the general duties branch of the Royal Marines in the near future."

"However, we must never forget the pioneering women whose dedication, courage and skill made all this possible, and whose example remains a source of inspiration and pride within the Naval Service today."

The Women's Royal Naval Service was initially commissioned on November 29 1917 towards the end of WW1 under the leadership of Dame Katherine Furse. Towards the end of WW2 the number of women in the WRNS was 75,000.

The WRNS disbanded on November 1 1993, after which 4,535 women transferred into the Royal Navy.

Currently the most senior serving female officer is Cdre Inga Kennedy, who in April 2017 was appointed Assistant Chief of Naval Staff and Head of the Royal Naval Medical Service; she is the first non-medical Officer and first woman to be assigned this appointment.

Women today are employed across the entire breadth of the Naval Service, making up ten per cent of all serving personnel.

2017 also marks the 25th anniversary since women musicians were permitted to serve alongside their male counterparts in HM Royal Marines Band Service.



● Sylvia Bell is assisted at the cathedral by CPO(AWW) Nikki Voller



● Former WO1 Alison Gott presents an uckers board to the Princess



Women stars of stamps

THE British Indian Ocean Territory Administration has released a set of three pairs of stamps and a first day cover celebrating the centenary of the formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

The stamps feature women in the Royal Navy today juxtaposed against Wrens throughout the last century.

The first stamps feature a modern-day female mine-clearance diver and WW1 Wrens working on a lathe.

The second pair depict an operations room warfare specialist and a WW2 boat crew.

The third pair show the first three female members of the Royal Navy to get their Dolphins and become submariners, next to a radar plotter from the 1970s.

You can buy the stamps online from the BIOT Post Office, or from the Stanley Gibbons stamp shop on the Strand in London, visit <http://www.biotpostoffice.com/index.asp>

■ THE work of Wrens in signal intelligence is the subject of a new display at Bletchley Park.

The pop-up exhibition includes a number of the roles performed by Wrens as part of Special Duties, such as bomb operators and those in the Naval Section and the Newmanry.

The exhibition runs until May 2018. For further details visit www.bletchleypark.org.uk



Females pitched into the spotlight

THE Royal Navy and Plymouth Argyle joined forces to celebrate and benefit military personnel and their families with an Armed Services Day match at Home Park.

The annual event, sponsored by Babcock, adopted the centenary of the Women's Royal Naval Service as the main charitable cause.

The match ball was delivered to the centre circle by Royal Marines on a zipwire.

WRNS veteran Pennie Burne said: "It's fantastic to see Plymouth and Plymouth Argyle supporting us Wrens. Plymouth is a Naval city and with the club is a huge part of the life of the people here."

Pauline Lake, chair of the HMS Drake branch of the Association of Wrens, said: "We are very grateful to the football club and



● Former Wren Stella King with AB(WS) Francesca White

for the support of the Royal Navy for this special occasion."

Royal Marines also held an unarmed combat display team, while other crowd pleasers included a penalty shootout

competition with the Argyle Youth Academy, the HMS Drake Volunteer Band and Plymouth Pipe Band. Plymouth were soundly beaten 4-0 by visiting Oxford Utd.



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THE HANGAR GAMES



pictures: po(phot) ray jones



AN AUTUMNAL dawn and the first golden hues of the coming day are reflected in the windows of a disused hangar.

A squad of Royal Marines from X-Ray Company emerge out of artificial smoke to begin the final assault on a terrorist stronghold – a former hangar on a Belgian air base which now serves as the repository for museum pieces of artillery and armour.

The 'battle of Weelde' was one of the closing acts of an exercise probably unique in Western Europe.

Typically, urban combat is practised in specially-built 'towns'; replicas – albeit as hollowed-out shells – of houses, community centres, schools and shops which troops might encounter... such as Copehill Down on Salisbury Plain, built in the 80s to mimic a German village.

The Belgian-led Storm Tide takes training out of the ranges and plonks soldiers slap bang in real towns and cities (last year the Flanders coastline and the port of Ostend).

For its fourth incarnation – cunningly titled Storm Tide 4 – the exercise shifted east to the banks of the Scheldt and the second greatest port in Europe (Antwerp) plus its eastern suburbs and satellite towns.

This year's Storm Tide was on a smaller scale – around 750 instead of 2,000 troops – but with the same goal: get civilians out of a war zone as quickly and safely as possible.

It was at Weelde air base that X-Ray's adventure began, flown in by Belgian Air Force Hercules C-130s transporter.

Once off the aircraft, the Arbroath-based commandos set about creating an airhead (stop giggling...) – a bridgehead or pocket around Weelde – to secure the airfield for future operations.

And then it was off to Antwerp where some 180 civilians needed rescuing.

In an age when tension across Europe was rife, the city was protected by a double ring of forts (sailors and marines of the Royal Naval Division fought in one of them 103 years ago).

And it was by storming one such Victorian fortification courtesy of a raid launched from small inflatable raiding craft on the neighbouring River Scheldt that the commandos began the non-combatant evacuation (shortened to NEO in military terminology) part of Storm Tide 4.

Having captured the fort, the Arbroath marines pushed into the heart of Antwerp to establish a reception centre in a school – checking for wounds and injuries, before dispatching the 'entitled persons' back to Weelde to be flown to safety.

The air base on the Dutch-Belgian border was chosen as the extraction point, from where they were flown to the safety of Brussels 50 miles away (and in a foreign land for the sake of the exercise).



As hosts the Belgians throw themselves wholeheartedly into the exercise. The civilian populace volunteer to be evacuees or refugee, civic buildings become reception centres, makeshift embassies and consulates, their schools battlegrounds, their streets one big playground for the military.

So the historic Flemish town of Turnhout, just half a dozen miles from Weelde, became the focal point of some of the evacuation as an 'ambassador' (aka the mayor) was holed up in his embassy (town hall) with two dozen EU citizens while the crack of rifle fire echoed around the town (blanks only, of course).

The ambassador was lucky; his consular colleague a few miles away in Brasschaat, in Antwerp's northeastern suburbs, was kidnapped. Commandos swept in on three helicopters to effect a rescue... only to find the building they stormed had already been evacuated.

It wasn't all bad news in Brasschaat. Embedded with Belgium red berets – 21 Company 3rd Parachute Battalion – with a translator provided by the hosts to get over any French/Flemish/Scottish language barriers, X-Ray's 5 Troop were charged with taking the fight to the enemy to prevent any of the reception centres or the evacuation hub coming under attack.

The Antwerp media billed Storm Tide 4 as a real-life Bruce Willis Hollywood action movie, *Guy Hard* if you like, given the scenario with participants (civilian and military) not sure what would happen or when.

Otherwise, life in Belgium went on as normal. Parents took their children to school, headed to work, returned from a trip to the shops and barely looked twice at the troops filing down their streets in combat gear and bearing arms.

Others, like Ingeborg Hain, felt drawn to watch the strange spectacle being played out in provincial Flemish towns.

"I hate war," she said emphatically, "but it also fascinates me – my cupboard is full of books about war. I just cannot help it."

Playing in real towns and real streets with real people brought out some real lessons. Traffic jams can be a bummer. Civilians can look like terrorists or militia... or peaceful citizens going about their daily business.

Some terrorists hid among the evacuees, hoping to smuggle a bomb aboard the Hercules due to evacuate them; a thorough search at one of the many reception centres established around Antwerp weeded them out.

And there was the small matter of taking down insurgents holed up in the Belgian Army's artillery/armour museum, something the commandos tackled with aplomb with their dawn raid which ended with the rebels sprawling on the ground of the museum hall as they were captured.

Which was a nice way to wrap things up.

"Storm Tide 4 gave the Marines of X-Ray Company a unique opportunity to train and to be tested in a realistic environment among the civilian population," said X-Ray's Second in Command Capt Rory Wells.

"It also allowed training for evacuation operations – something that has been carried out by the Royal Navy in the not-so-distant past."





Emotional visit to battlefields

CHIEF Petty Officer Gary Braddock places a small poppy cross at the grave of his great grandfather Nicholas as sailors from Britain's newest aircraft carrier honoured the dead of two world wars.

A group of 21 sailors from HMS Prince of Wales spent a week in France and Belgium following in the footsteps of the liberators of Normandy and, for senior rating Gary, to the Great War battlefields which claimed the lives of three of his family.

Only one has a grave – 22-year-old Pte Nicholas Braddock, killed on October 1 1916 and buried at Warlencourt with 1,688 other dead of the Somme.

Four months later, Able Seaman George Braddock fell fighting with the soldier-sailors of the Royal Naval Division in the forgotten battles of the Ancre – the final stages of the Somme onslaught.

And before 1917 was out there was more terrible news for the County Durham family when the third Braddock brother was killed serving with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in Flanders.

The body of Nicholson Braddock was never recovered, but his name is listed with thousands of others on the memorial at Tyne Cot Cemetery in Passchendaele.

Even more unidentified dead from the Ypres Salient are listed on the Menin Gate memorial in Ypres itself – over 54,000 souls in all.

To honour their sacrifice the *Last Post* has been sounded daily at 8pm by the local fire brigade for the past 90 years with the exception of World War 2, when the ceremony was continued at Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey until the occupation of Belgium ended.

Veterans, relatives and associations are invited to lay wreaths at the Menin Gate memorial during the ceremony.

And so it fell to CPO Braddock, Lt Pete Gow and LET Andrew Oliver to represent their ship and place a poppy wreath on the steps of the imposing memorial, watched by hundreds of onlookers.

"To understand the significance of what involvement in the Menin Gate ceremony means to an individual is impossible to describe," said



Gary. "For me it was an utterly sobering occasion, deeply emotional and full of the deepest honour and pride."

The visit to Ypres was the spiritual highpoint of the week-long battlefield tour, designed as a command and leadership test for the Prince of Wales sailors as they had to research various clashes and the sites where they were fought... then guide their shipmates through them.

They began at Southwick House just outside Portsmouth – Eisenhower's HQ for D-Day – then crossed the Channel to visit the Normandy landings beaches of Utah, Omaha, Gold and Sword, the cliffs at Point du Hoc and Pegasus Bridge, seized by airborne troops in the first hours of June 6 1944.

From Normandy the focus switched to the Great War and the Somme – the gigantic crater at Lochnagar, the Thiepval Memorial (to the Somme what the Menin Gate is to Ypres) and the trenches at Beaumont Hamel.

"Our smiles turned to sombre awe as we approached a crater bigger than we could fathom," Wtr Lee Cander said of the crater at La Boisselle.

The Royal Naval Division – formed from surplus sailors at the outbreak of war and sent to the front as soldiers – saw action in Gallipoli, the Somme, Ypres and Arras.

The divisional memorial to those killed in the latter battles can be found in the village of Gavrelle, another stop on the five-day tour.

The last visit on the Continent was the beach at Dunkirk.

The team then returned to the ship – formally named by the Duchess of Rothesay in September – at Rosyth, via a minor detour to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.



● Above, from left, a boiler from SMS Karlsruhe; the 150mm barrel of the main gun from Kronprinz Wilhelm; CPO Yeardley inspects the boiler of a small salvage vessel; anti-aircraft guns on the wreck of F2



● Above, from left, the stern anchor of SMS Cöln; CPO Yeardley peers from the stern of the wreck of V83; the rudder and propeller of the Mara; viewing the plentiful sealife on the stern of SMS Karlsruhe



Shining a light on German WWI fleet

Historic bell restored

THE historic Zeebrugge Bell, presented to the people of Dover by the King of the Belgians, Albert I, is undergoing conservation ahead of the centenary of one of the most significant naval engagements of World War 1.

Work on the Zeebrugge Bell is being undertaken by John Taylor & Co in Loughborough – the UK's last working bell foundry.

The bell is housed at Dover's Grade I listed Maison Dieu and is struck each year by the Town Mayor at noon on St George's Day as part of annual commemorations organised by Dover Town Council to mark the anniversary of the raids on the Belgian ports of Zeebrugge and

Ostend.

The audacious attempt to block German U-boats from entering the English Channel involved over 70 ships and 1,000 men, many of them volunteers from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. Casualties were high, with 200 dead and over 400 injured. Eleven Victoria Crosses and 679 other decorations were awarded for bravery.

The Zeebrugge Bell was hung at the harbour entrance at Zeebrugge and used to warn of enemy attack. It was presented to the Corporation of Dover in 1918. Preparations are under way for events to mark the centenary of the raids in both Dover and Deal.

THE remains of the German WW1 light cruiser SMS Karlsruhe are explored by CPO Scott Yeardley 28 metres down in the cold waters of Scapa Flow.

Scott was joined by 11 fellow members of the Naval Service for Exercise Rusty Merganser – a Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sub Aqua Association expedition to Orkney.

Following the German defeat in WW1, 74 ships of the Imperial German Navy's High Seas Fleet were interned in Gutter Sound at Scapa Flow pending a decision on their future in the Treaty of Versailles.

On June 21 1919, after seven months of waiting, Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter, the German officer in command at Scapa Flow, made the decision to scuttle the fleet.

After waiting for the bulk of the British fleet to leave on exercises, he gave the order to scuttle the ships to prevent their falling into British hands. The Royal Navy made desperate efforts to board the ships to prevent the sinkings, but the German crews had spent the idle months preparing for the order, welding bulkhead doors open, laying charges in vulnerable parts of the ships, and quietly dropping important keys and tools overboard so valves could not be shut.

The British Navy managed to beach the battleship Baden, the light cruisers Nürnberg, and Frankfurt and 18 destroyers, whereas 53 ships – the vast bulk of the High Seas Fleet – were sunk. Nine German sailors died on one of these ships when British forces opened fire as they

attempted to scuttle the ship, reputedly the last casualties of WW1.

The wrecks are now a World Heritage site and attract divers from around the globe who take the opportunity to dive on ships of a scale that exists in very few other places.

Diver LAET James Rogers, of 824 NAS, said: "I never thought I'd get the chance in my Naval Service to see such an awe-inspiring monument to the grand navies of the First World War and the dreadnought battleships that dominated them."

Rusty Merganser saw divers, who represented units including HMS Enterprise, the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre, 30 Cdo IX Gp, BRNC, 824 NAS, Salvage and Maritime Operations, 45 Cdo and the Merlin Project Team from DE&S, spend a week aboard MV Valhalla.

The vessel, which was originally built for the Royal Navy in 1972 as a Loyal-class fleet tender, now operates out of Stromness Harbour as a live-aboard diving boat.

The divers visited the König-class battleships Markgraf, which lies at a depth of 45m, and Kronprinz Wilhelm, which lies at 40m.

With a gross displacement of nearly 30,000 tonnes these were ships of staggering magnitude and now lie upside down on the seabed. The Kronprinz Wilhelm lies at a slight list, which allows divers to visit the main armament and see the guns that fired at the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

Along with SMS König, they formed the main component of the 3rd Battleship Squadron, which took part in fierce fighting at the Battle of Jutland. Never raised, they have been salvaged

incrementally: armour plate blasted away and non-ferrous metals removed.

C/Sgt Tim Hall, of 30 Cdo IX Gp, said: "I've been diving for 17 years and I completed the Twinset and Accelerated Decompression Course at JSSADC last September. This has given me the opportunity to gain extended range and time on some of the best and most challenging wreck diving in the world."

Divers also viewed the cruiser Cöln, which lies on its side at 36m and is sufficiently intact that divers can easily swim along the mess decks that once lay under the forward 150mm Krupps guns.

Some divers were also fortunate enough to have the magical experience of being visited by a curious seal while doing this. Other divers shared a decompression stop at six metres with a guillemot seabird that swam around them.

The team also dived on the submarine UB116, which was sunk with all crew in October 1918 by a remotely-detonated minefield while attempting to penetrate the extensive defences protecting the main harbour.

It was later found to still have live ammunition on board, dispersed by Royal Navy divers in the early 1970s. Lying at 31m on a clear sandy seabed, it was an evocative dive where divers could clearly identify elements such as the structural ribs, conning tower, aft hydrovanes and compressed air cylinders for the ballast tanks.

CPOAET(AV) Mick Evans, of the Merlin Project Team, said: "This has been some of the most exciting diving I've ever done. I now need to find something else to put on top of my bucket list."

Other wrecks visited included the light cruiser SMS Dresden II, which lies at a depth of 38m, the minelaying light cruiser SMS Brummer, 36m, the torpedo destroyer V83 and the F2 escort boat, which both lie at a depth of 18m – the latter sank in a storm just after WW2.

The divers also viewed the wrecks of the motor fishing vessel Mara, which sank in bad weather in 1995, and HMS Roedean, a minesweeper which

sank after colliding with the bow of the repair hulk Imperious in January 1915.

Lots of sea life was observed including lobsters, crabs, dogfish, jellyfish, pollack, ling, mackerel, an array of starfish and even a timid octopus.

Diving conditions are demanding due to the water temperature, depth, underwater visibility and weather conditions that exist on the surface in the very north of Scotland.

The majority of the dives were conducted using technical diving techniques.

All divers used either twinsets or closed-circuit rebreathers which both allow divers to stay underwater for longer.

Accelerated decompression on high percentage nitrox mixtures were also used by most divers which reduces the amount of time spent doing in-water decompression. For deep dives a few divers also breathed Trimix which reduces the effects of nitrogen narcosis.

The expedition also allowed for some cultural events, joining the local inhabitants for a Scottish country-dancing lesson at Stromness town hall and visiting the Scapa Flow Visitor Centre and Museum at the former HMS Prosperine in Lyness on the island of Hoy.

Capt Lee Piper, from the Royal Navy Leadership Academy at BRNC, said: "Over the week I saw both junior and senior personnel develop the key leadership and decision-making qualities that we try to instil in officer cadets in my current role at BRNC."

Sub Lt Tom Hourigan, of HMS Enterprise, added: "It was fantastic to be part of a team of strangers from across the Naval Service that came together so quickly and worked so well under demanding conditions. The benefits of adventurous training are clear."

For further details of the wrecks at Scapa Flow, visit www.scapafloowrecks.com; for details of the sub aqua association visit www.rnrmsaa.webs.com and for the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre visit www.jssadc.org



Sonar reveals wrecks from Falklands war

LYING with her port side buried in the sea bed, this is the outline of HMS Coventry, one of three Falklands wrecks surveyed in stunning detail by HMS Enterprise to mark the 35th anniversary of the South Atlantic conflict.

The separated remains of HMS Antelope, which lie at a 45-degree angle on the bottom of San Carlos Water, and her sister HMS Ardent, which sank in nearby Grantham Sound after being hit by a succession of bombs, were also scanned by Enterprise and her hi-tech survey launch Spitfire.

It's the first time in five years the wrecks have been scanned, part of work by the survey ship to update charts of the Falklands for use by fellow mariners.

Type 21 frigate Ardent was hit by several air raids on the first day of the San Carlos landings and sank the next day, taking 22 men with her.

Antelope was struck by a 1,000lb bomb which failed to explode initially, until it was triggered as bomb disposal experts worked to defuse it; the resulting explosions eventually tore the ship in two.

"Of all our sonar images of 1982 wrecks, we think Antelope is the most remarkable – the 4.5-inch gun is probably still loaded," said Cdr Philip Harper, Enterprise's CO.

Destroyer HMS Coventry put up a spirited fight against Argentine aircraft, downing two in company with HMS Broadsword in a trap set for the enemy north of Falkland Sound.

The success of the trap led to the pair being targeted. Three bombs tore the heart out of the destroyer as they struck Coventry on the port side, causing her to sink in a matter of minutes with the loss of 20 souls.

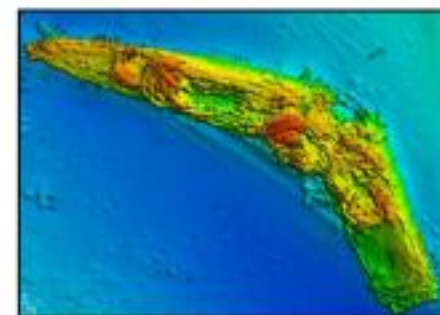
Coventry lies 300ft down 13 miles north of Pebble Island, an expanse of water as bleak and blustery now as it was 35 years ago – as a dozen survivors of the destroyer found on a pilgrimage to the site with HMS Clyde.

Today's sailors joined the veterans on the flight deck for a service of remembrance before a wreath was cast into the South Atlantic and a tot of rum poured into the waters at the request of relatives of crew lost on May 25 1982.

"Hopefully we have done our shipmates proud, right over the spot where we were sunk 35 years ago," said Chris Howe, Coventry Association chairman.

"It's been amazing to come back here and remember our shipmates who are still on patrol. Some of us are of an age where we might not be able to get down here again."

Lt Emily Witcher, Clyde's operations officer, said the guardship's crew had been both



● The wreck of HMS Antelope

fascinated and moved by the veterans' accounts of life in the RN in 82.

"It's been really interesting learning the differences between the Navy of then and now and especially what these men went through – which the modern sailor might not have appreciated before, especially the conditions some of them endured," she said.

Before visiting the wreck site, the Coventry veterans trekked to the hilltop on Pebble Island where a cross stands in memory of the ship and her crew.

It was restored for the 2017 Remembrance period by Clyde's crew, part of a concerted effort by sailors based in the Falklands to maintain monuments to the men of 1982.

Clyde is responsible for the memorials to Ardent and Antelope, 3 Commando Brigade Air Squadron at Port San Carlos, and the SAS and HMS Coventry memorials on Pebble Island.

Sailors from the Naval Engineering Falkland Islands detachment look after monuments to HMS Fearless' sunken landing craft F4 at Bertha's Beach, destroyer HMS Sheffield on Sealion Island and frigate HMS Alacrity at Port Howard.

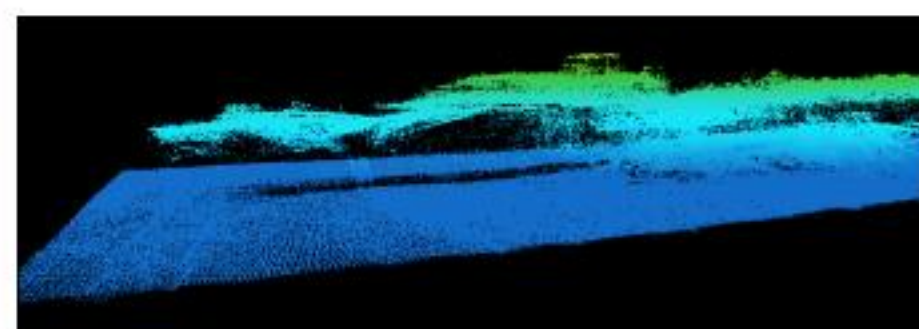
"The harsh weather makes any renovation work challenging – even the simplest task such as sanding or painting can suddenly become very difficult in 50mph winds or in temperatures below zero," explained WO1 Ian Gorman, in charge of NEFI.

"And just getting to the memorial sites can be logistically challenging, with many only accessible by helicopter or a combination of ship, sea boat and a long yomp."

The remoteness of many monuments means most repair and conservation work has to be done on the spot, with the limited tools and materials that have to be carried by the sailors.

"Despite the memorials' remote locations, it is not unusual to have an audience – the local wildlife populace often takes a keen interest," said Lt Matt Ivory, Clyde's marine engineer officer.

"They keep a watchful eye on the standard of work and seize any opportunity to steal any unattended tools or lunches – especially the mischievous local bird of prey, the caracara."



● A sonar scan of the wreck of HMS Ardent



● Clockwise from below left, Sub Lt Tom Hourigan, with sidemounted cylinders, inspects the main gun of the F2; Sea Scorpion fish camouflaged on a section of SMS Brummer; the remains of the conning tower from UB116; the team aboard MV Valhalla; POAET Mick Evans and LAET James Rogers warm up with a post-dive hot chocolate; CPO Scott Yeardley examines the breech of a 105mm gun



At the going down of the sun



THE sun sets on the iconic Commando Memorial at **Spean Bridge** in Scotland as the nation paused for the annual act of Remembrance.

Fifty Royal Marines from Clyde-based 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group joined veterans and members of the public at the Achnacarry monument.

Marching to the site, set amid the backdrop of the rugged Scottish Highlands, the Royal Marines were joined by Lochaber Schools Pipe Band, the Royal British Legion Scotland and members of the Commando Veterans' Association.

Leading the service were Reverends Richard Baxter and Morag Muirhead, who read from Psalm 45. There was also a reading of the Commando Prayer of St Ignatius, which was used by the Special Service Group during the war.

Laying a wreath on behalf of 43 Cdo was Commanding Officer of the unit, Col Tony de Reya, while Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Al Sullivan read from the Roll of Honour.

Also attending were Commandos from WW2, including 95-year-old Jack Lamb who served

with 3 Cdo during the D-Day landings and Ted Owen, also 95, who served with 46 Cdo.

Poignant ceremonies were held throughout the UK and abroad as Naval Service personnel past and present paid tribute to the UK's war dead.

The Queen watched as her wreath was placed at the **Cenotaph in London** by the Prince of Wales. Members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines took part in the capital's ceremonies, including the Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance in the **Royal Albert Hall** and the Lord Mayor's Parade through the **City of London**.

C/Sgt Dave Watts was one of the members of the Armed Forces to lay a wreath at **Wembley** ahead of England's friendly against Germany.

In the Caribbean, **RFA Mounts Bay** held a service on her flight deck. CO Capt Steve Norris led the men and women of the ship's company, which includes a Wildcat flight from 815 NAS, a HADR troop of Royal Engineers and Royal Marines and a boat detachment from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, RLC.

In the Mediterranean services were held aboard **HMS Monmouth** and **HMS Ocean**, where personnel from the United States

Marine Corps joined the ship's company for the commemorations. Ocean, currently flagship of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2, has embarked Bravo Coy from 40 Cdo, members of 820, 845 and 847 NAS.

A series of tributes were held by Armed Forces personnel in the Gulf. Sailors from **HMS Ledbury** and **UKMCC** tidied up the Christian cemetery in Bahrain ahead of the services.

A main Remembrance Day ceremony took place at the British Embassy, while the following day saw personnel from **UKMCC** join other RN members at Mina Salman for a service, which was also attended by representatives from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. **UKMCC** and **COMUKMCMFOR** personnel also attended afternoon tea with a group of Chelsea Pensioners at the British Embassy gardens.

At **Britannia Royal Naval College**, Mid Chris Ivill attended a service at Kingswear wearing medals won by his great-uncle AB Leslie Ivor McLanaghan.

His ancestor, who was killed in action in May 1945, was a member of the Motor Gun Boat Flotilla that operated from the town during WW2.

"To represent a relative 73 years on from

when he served is a huge honour, and one that I am immensely proud of," said Mid Ivill.

"Leslie was 18 years old when he joined the Royal Navy, the same age at which I joined, and he was killed at the age of 20.

"He joined during a war and served on fast patrol boats, performing dangerous missions which at times lasted in excess of 24-hours, and the fact that he was younger than me when doing it all is a powerful thought today."

Officers and cadets also attended a service at Dartmouth Academy as well as taking part in ceremonies at Brixham, Dartmouth, Dittisham, Kingsbridge, Totnes and Townstal.

Hundreds of people turned out to join personnel from **HMNB Devonport** for Plymouth's annual Remembrance Service, while Royal Navy and Royal Marines from **HMNB Portsmouth** took part in Portsmouth's civic service in Guildhall Square.

Three horses from the **Royal Navy and Royal Marines Riding Stables** at Bickleigh Barracks attended an Armistice Day service in Plymouth's Piazza.

Taking the lead wearing a poppy garland was a Percheron called Anoushka, who represented the breed of horse used in the

n ...we will remember them



Picture: LPhot Will Haigh, FRPU North

Battle of the Somme. Following Anoushka was Bob representing the Cobs and bringing up the rear was Sam, an American Quarter horse representing officers' horses.

Personnel from **HMNB Clyde** took part in a service at the base and also attended services in nearby Helensburgh as well as in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

At Scotland's national Remembrance event in Edinburgh, the Royal Navy was represented by Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland Rear Admiral John Weale, who laid a wreath at the Stone of Remembrance. He was joined by personnel from **HMS Scotia** who provided the Guard.

In Helensburgh, former Wren Joy Penrose-Stupart laid a wreath at the town's cenotaph to mark the centenary of the Womens' Royal Naval Service.

Naval Regional Commander Scotland and Northern Ireland Capt Chris Smith represented the Royal Navy at Glasgow's Remembrance ceremony, alongside personnel from the city's affiliated ship **HMS Defender**.

In Dundee Commanding Officer of affiliated ship **HMS Duncan**, Cdr Eleanor Stack, and a dozen of her crew attended the parade, led

by Royal Marines Band Scotland, along with a contingent from HMS Scotia's Tay Division.

Cdr Bob Laverty, Commanding Officer of **HMS Forth**, was present at affiliated city Stirling's Remembrance event with six of his crew.

Personnel from **HMS Montrose** attended a number of remembrance events. A small group left the ship in Devonport for a ten-hour drive to Montrose in Scotland to take part in an Armistice Day ceremony.

Lts Dave Salberg and James Young went on to lead the two-minute silence at Montrose FC's game. The ship was also represented at the County of Angus service in Forfar.

Seven members of the ship's company attended a service at affiliate town of Fowey; AB Claire Start was a flag bearer while AB Grant Mitchell laid a wreath.

Members of the ship's company represented the RN at numerous ceremonies across the country.

Lt Cdr Chris Andrews paid his respects at the grave of Lt Cdr Arthur Lane, who died in HMS Assistance in 1918. He discovered the grave in the West Midlands while researching his home area.

Commando Training Centre Royal Marines held a two-minute silence and a parade.

During a service of remembrance at **Navy Command Headquarters** in Portsmouth, the Warrant Officer of the Naval Service WO1 Nick Sharland read out the names of personnel who had died during the previous year.

They are:

Cdr Christopher Smith; Cdr Kevin Charlton; POET(WESM) Charles Payne; ABWS Jon-Josiah Nicholson; Lt Christopher Hemming; Mne William Tindle; WO1 Kevin Williams; ET(MESM) Mark Shores; LMA(SM) Tony Ullah; LS Glen Turner; LAET Steven Taylor; Second Officer Garry Hogg, RFA; Lt Cdr Andrew Bolam; Comms Rating Eamonn Crerand, RFA; Mne Jonathan Langford; Mne James Holloway.

At **RNAS Yeovilton** a Fairey Swordfish flew over the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church in a moving tribute to the 6,750 Royal Naval Air Service and Fleet Air Arm personnel who have given their lives in the service of naval aviation. Armistice Day also marked the anniversary of the Battle of Taranto.

Around 350 sailors from **HMS Raleigh** attended a service at Horson Cemetery, the

final resting place for 74 Service personnel. Raleigh's CO Capt Ellie Ablett and a platoon of sailors attended a civic service at Torpoint.

Families joined Royal Marines at **RM Condor** in Arbroath for the base's service, which took place at the Woodlands Memorial Gardens, in front of the monument to the fallen from 45 Cdo.

Services were also held at **HMS Collingwood**, **RNAS Culdrose** and **HMS Sultan**.

Royal Naval Reserve units also took part in ceremonies, with **HMS Sherwood** joining the civic service at Nottingham War Memorial Gardens and **HMS President** serving as the launch site for the Lord Mayor of London's parade.

Sailors and marines based at **HMS Calliope** took part in the main civic memorial service at the City War Memorial, Eldon Square, Newcastle.

In Liverpool Royal Marines from **RMR Merseyside** joined the city's civic service. Following the Last Post and the two-minute silence, thousands of petals cascaded down from St George's Hall.

IN VIKING and Jackal armoured vehicles. From landing craft. In fast boats launched from the back of gigantic helicopters. Under covering fire from field guns and mortars. Machine-guns. Rifle fire.

Royal Marines stormed and stalked the marshlands and sands of North Carolina in the largest, most dynamic war game staged by their American counterparts on the Eastern Seaboard this year.

Now in its seventh year, Bold Alligator sees marine corps and soldiers from around the world converge on Camp Lejeune – the US Marine Corps' premier training ground.

42 Commando, Britain's lead commando group, were due to fly the flag for the UK... but were recovering after their exertions in the Caribbean clearing up after hurricanes...

...so their comrades from 45 Commando in Arbroath found themselves heading across the pond instead.

In fact the heavy commitment of US amphibious forces in the Caribbean responding to those same storms, the 2017 incarnation of Bold Alligator was substantially scaled down.

It still, however, featured some jaw-dropping firepower: an entire aircraft carrier battle group – USS George H W Bush, plus four destroyers and two cruisers – three assault ships, two minehunters, M1 Abrams tanks (the US equivalent of a Challenger 2) and elements of four marine units. And then there were the foreign guests: troops from Norway, France, Canada, Brazil, the French Foreign Legion, and Mexico.

Bold Alligator opened on a relatively small scale, with participants working either individually or in groups to build up their combat skills brick-by-brick.

45 Cdo's Mortar Troop and 8 (Alma) Battery from 29 Commando Regiment RA from the Citadel in Plymouth had the chance to lay down live fire; the former spew 81mm rounds, the latter 105mm shells at targets up to 12 miles away.

"Looking at how the US Marines do things and how they use their equipment, we see minute differences in how we do things," said gunnery officer Lt Tom Brindley-Slater. "Being an artillery gunner, the results are the same in the end."

Namely 2.5kg of high explosive going 'boom'.

"It's important for us to understand how everyone operates," said fellow officer Lt Paul Wilson. "When we work together during operations, we can understand how each other work; this essentially gets all of the pieces together as one."

The biggest difference the gunners found were climatic; instead of the temperate surroundings of Plymouth's Citadel or the North Sea-chill of Arbroath, even in late October, temperatures at Camp Lejeune were in the high 20s Celsius and with the terrain swampy, humidity was nearly 100 per cent.

The mortar men were given added mobility by the Vikings of the Armoured Support Group which normally haul Royal Marines around on the battlefield in a troop-carrying trailer.

Some modified trailers serve as the base for the L16 mortar, however. It can put down up to 15 rounds a minute at targets up to 3½ miles away, each 4kg shell leaving the barrel at more than 500mph.

You can fire mortars and 105mm artillery pieces in the UK, but it's the scale of the US Marine Corps' exercise areas which make them popular playgrounds for the Brits. There's Camp Pendleton on the West Coast (about the size of Tyne and Wear), the live firing ranges at Twentynine Palms in the Mojave Desert (the size of Northamptonshire). And in the East, there's Lejeune, about 350 miles south of Washington DC.

"Camp Lejeune is over one and a half times the size of the Isle of Wight, so this gives us the opportunity to do some really large-scale training," explained Sub Lt Johnny Danks, 45's Education Officer.

"Training with our international partners is one of the best aspects of this exercise."

It also helps that the US military possesses some pretty impressive kit, such as the immersion trainer – a custom-built facility designed to simulate the conditions of a combat zone as closely as possible with actors and props. It even replicates the sounds and smells of the battlefield.

While the infantry elements of 45 were fully 'immersed', commando medics established a 'role 2' medical facility – where life-saving operations and treatment is provided to casualties so they can be transferred to hospital – treating 'wounded' troops alongside US medics and surgeons as they compared equipment and techniques.

The Camp Lejeune exercise areas are also home to the 'kill house' – a shooting range which allows 360-degree arcs of firing with live ammunition. Troops can train to fight hand-to-hand, urban combat – as they would in real life.

45 Commando's weapons company rolled out their Jackal vehicles. Designed for rapid assault and fire support, Jackals provide a stable weapons platform as well as protection from improvised explosive devices. They particularly enjoyed the free rein they were given.

"The four Jackal shoots were a brilliant training opportunity said Lt Chris Byrne, Officer Commanding the fire support machine-gunners of 1 Troop, Whisky Company.

"The sheer size of the range offers much greater training benefit than anything we could have achieved in the UK – the much larger ranges and the greater amount of time and ammunition allowed for everyone to pass mandatory shoots and consolidate their skills.

"The fervour with which Whisky Coy attacked this training package was only matched by the enthusiasm with which we cleaned the weapons before being released for a well-deserved stand down!"

Also providing firepower on the move were the

Viking mortar variants – replacing the rear troop-carrying trailer with the 81mm artillery piece.

Far in advance of the artillery and infantry on the field of battle are the Special Reconnaissance Squadron – similar to the Americans' Force Recon – which races ahead of the main invasion spearhead to provide an in-depth understanding of the enemy forces the bulk of the troops will encounter.

Having tested all the individual parts, Bold Alligator reached its climax with the 'liberation' of North Carolina (playing the part of a fictitious land attacked from the outside by aggressive neighbours and from within by insurgents) involving all the various elements.

It fell to the Royal Marines – and their allies – to move ashore from a ship and retake the town of Mout from an invading militia.

Mout is actually MOUT – the Military Operation Urban Terrain facility, a replica town where troops can practise and rehearse close-quarters battle and explosive and mechanical 'methods of entry' drills (such as blowing up doors... or battering them down).

Despite being thrown into the exercise at ten days' notice, the men from Arbroath have enjoyed the experience.

"At this point the lads' morale is hooping – decent training, loads of opportunities with a clear purpose – despite sweating profusely in full Personnel Protection Equipment in temperatures at least 30°C and 100 per cent humidity," said Cpl 'Mac' McCallum of Yankee Company.

Lt Col Duncan Forbes, 45 Cdo's Commanding Officer, said both the exercise and the setting had been just what his unit needed.

"The training areas of Camp Lejeune provide the perfect ranges to practise our firing and manoeuvres – we can practise and repeat serials, consistently improving and testing ourselves in new scenarios.

"Overall Bold Alligator has been a fantastic opportunity for us to hone our amphibious skills in a fast-paced and complex scenario with our closest international partners.

"Our ability to launch from the sea at a time and place of our choosing and to fulfil a variety of roles, from amphibious operations to disaster relief, as we've seen in the Caribbean over the past few weeks, is a skill unique to the Royal Marine Commandos."

YOU don't have to go as far as North Carolina if you're a Royal Marine and want to blow things up.

Chesapeake, Virginia, 200 miles north of Camp Lejeune, is just fine if you want to practise the ultimate test of any close-combat warrior: recapturing a nuclear device.

The men of R Squadron 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group live, eat, sleep and breathe the problem of 'dynamic nuclear security' – everything from safeguarding the Royal Navy's four Vanguard-class ballistic missile submarines on the water, courtesy of its Boat Troop in armed patrol craft, to what is described as 'recapture capability', retaking a building, compound or complex housing Trident missiles in the face of armed hostiles.

Similar thoughts occupy the minds of the men of the US Marines' Security Force Regiment, charged with safeguarding their nation's nuclear weapons.

Two decades ago, the similar missions sparked the first joint training involving the two specialist units: Tartan Eagle (Tartan being the Scottish element... Eagle the bit across the Pond).

Now an annual occurrence, it sees the Brits host the Americans over the summer... and a few weeks later, the US Marine Corps reciprocates the hospitality.

The exercise tests new ranks fresh from earning their green berets at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone as well as experienced Royal Marines and reinforces the strong bond between the two marine corps.

The Americans' base at Chesapeake features a close-quarters battle trainer – allowing troops to practise hand-to-hand fighting in a building, using live rounds for added authenticity.

Before the men of R Squadron could enter the 'live-fire shoot house' – something they do not have access to in the UK – they first had to swap their trusty British-issue weapons (Glock 17 pistol and C8 assault rifle) for the USMC's weapons of choice, the M4 rifle and M9 Beretta. One pound lighter than the C8, the American rifle is also designed for close-quarters combat, while the Beretta is heavier and fires slightly fewer rounds than the UK Forces' favoured pistol.

Once qualified on the American weapons, R Squadron were able to move into the shoot house and some advanced Close Quarter Marksmanship drills sharing tactics and ideas with their American comrades on clearing and securing an urban objective.

Working with their US equivalent helps maintain the most effective methods and techniques in order to efficiently complete their tasking which would ultimately see them use the skills practised in Virginia for real if R Squadron were called upon.



Scotland-based Royal Marines are invited to unleash hell in the US

Star-spangled tartan





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Are we there yet?

Commando Gunners in epic 1,532-mile ride

CAN you cycle the length of Europe?

You'll need to cover more than 100 miles a day. In 35°C heat.

No problem. If you're a Commando Gunner that is.

A 22-strong team took on the endurance challenge to raise funds for the ABF, the Soldiers' Charity.

The team, who are based at the Royal Citadel in Plymouth, left Calais, bound for Gibraltar.

Riding south through France, over the Pyrenees and across Spain took a vast amount of planning and coordination to ensure that the riders could navigate, refuel and sleep comfortably in order to get up the next day and repeat their efforts.

Conditioning the riders to be able to cope with riding 100-plus miles per day meant long days in the saddle across Dartmoor throughout the winter, which couldn't quite replicate the 35°C heat they experienced in Spain, but at least gave them some much-needed bike skills required to handle the fast descents and the busy continental towns.

Fifteen days after the riders left northern France they arrived at the Rock – 1,532 miles away.

Lance Bombardier Kieron Oughton said: "The training in the Plymouth area helped immensely in preparation for the long hours we spent cycling together, but the heat was tortuous".

Raising money for charity started in the UK and continued during the ride.

Gunner Mitch Grieves said: "The support we received all through Europe was incredible – people were constantly asking what we were doing and were only too willing to donate when they realised it was for a good cause."

"It definitely lifted our spirits and made everything worthwhile".

Col Ashley Fulford went to the Royal Citadel to accept the cheque on behalf of the charity and thank the members of 23 Commando Battery for all their hard work.

He said, "I can't thank the battery enough for raising £5,135, a sterling effort which will have a tangible affect on those soldiers, veterans and their immediate families that the charity seeks to help."

For details about ABF – the Soldiers' Charity – visit <http://www.soldierscharity.org>



Ton-up for 845

PERSONNEL from 845 NAS's Operational Conversion Flight took a break from learning to fly the battlefield Merlin with a gruelling pedal around rural England.

The riders covered more than 100 miles around Somerset and Dorset, climbing 6,600ft – that's nearly twice the height of Snowdon – dropping in on supporters of Navy Wings, the charity which keeps vintage FAA aircraft in working order.

Setting out from 845's Yeovilton home on a cold and rainy morning, the first stop was Leonardo in Yeovil, long-time supporter of Navy Wings and suppliers of the Fleet Air Arm's three helicopter types (Merlin, Wildcat and last few remaining Sea Kings).

Eighteen miles further down the road and the cyclists stopped at Chard Equestrian to meet Andrew Whitehouse of Lift West, a materials handling company.

This may seem an unlikely destination until the riders entered the 'hangar' and found two vintage Wessex helicopters under restoration with the goal of returning them to the skies in the near future.

Next stop, Portland – until a couple of decades ago a major FAA base (HMS Osprey), today a mix of Coastguard station and business park; among the occupants of the latter, HeliOperations, aviation management experts.

After a stop for lunch, the team began the long haul north with 60 miles in their legs and a stiff breeze in their faces.

The final stop came at Church House Investments of Sherborne, a local company and, once again, keen supporters of Navy Wings. They provided the riders with much-needed refreshment before making the final dash back to Yeovilton.

"It was a tough ride for all the riders but one which was thoroughly enjoyed," said pilot Lt Craig Cavanagh.

Funded entirely by public donation, Navy Wings restores, maintains and flies a collection of rare and historically-significant naval aircraft – a working memorial to naval aviators going back to the pioneers of 1909.

Going extra miles for children

PERSONNEL serving in HMS Middleton completed the Three Peaks Challenge to raise funds to buy Christmas presents for poorly children.

Members of MCM2 Crew 4 spent 12 hours on their task at the US Navy's shore base in Bahrain.

Cash was raised for Fatboys Cancer Charity, which provides festive gifts for youngsters suffering from cancer and leukaemia.

Crew members cycled 650 miles – the distance between the UK's three highest peaks, Snowdon, Scarfell Pike and Ben Nevis, and also climbed the equivalent height of Mount Everest, 8,848 metres – nearly three times the goal of their initial planned ascent.

Over the 12 hours, teams of two and three continuously ascended the purpose-built climbing wall at the NSA Bahrain, while crew mates simultaneously tackled the distances between the three UK peaks on four exercise bikes below.

The total ascent of the UK peaks is 3,408m, meaning that the wall had to be climbed 426 times – or the equivalent of climbing New York's Empire State Building eight times.

Competition heated up on



the climbing wall as crew members competed to see who could scale it the most.

AB(D) Henry Morgan managed to complete 72 climbs in one hour, setting the bar high for anyone else. By the end of the day he had climbed the wall a total of 189 times.

With the hours ticking by, and an ever higher total elevation gradually being scaled, in the final hour the crew calculated that



in fact they could climb the equivalent height of Mount Everest (1,107 climbs) and cycle from Lands End to John O'Groats (884 miles) all within the 12 hours.

During the final ten minutes of the challenge, there were still 22 climbs to complete. It only was in the last ten seconds that the final hand hit the top of the climbing wall and a chorus of cheers erupted from below. They had climbed Mount

Everest and cycled a total of 930 miles, all in 12 hours.

AB(MW) Alex Searle said: "I have always been pretty scared of heights. So, even getting the kit on to climb would have been daunting enough."

"Seeing everyone else putting lots of effort in, and remembering why we are doing this event, made me overcome my fears and I managed to complete 17 climbs. It was brilliant fun."

Throughout the day the crew had support from a number of different groups, including other members of the Royal Navy, United States Navy and members of the 32 nation Combined Maritime Forces also serving in Bahrain.

Middleton's CO, Lt Cdr Anthony Pimm, said: "What we achieved at the NSA in Bahrain can only be described as a monumental result."

"It was an amazing team effort from everyone involved and it took extraordinary reserves of physical and mental courage, but my crew did it – and then some."

The event raised approximately £4,500 through online donations and money given on the day.

Crew members AB(MW) William Jones and ET(WE) Stephen Owen will help the charity hand out gifts on Christmas Day.



Great groundwork

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh have planted daffodils and bluebells in an area of Saltash used by members the public.

The group lent their support to the Saltash Waterside Residents Association at Elwell Woods, where they also cut back brambles and overgrowth.

HMS Raleigh instructor PO Ricky Abram-Giles said: "These trainees are part of Crean Division, our rehabilitation unit for anyone who has suffered injury or illness during training."

"It's good for them to have a break from their day-to-day routine at HMS Raleigh and great to re-establish links between HMS Raleigh and Saltash."

Some of the trainees were able to bring skills learned in their civilian life to the project.

Recruit Toby Ranner, 19, who previously undertook

groundwork for music festivals and also worked in landscape gardening, said: "I've been using the power tools to clear areas around the site. It's nice to come back and do something like this."

Recruit Luke Belshaw, 20, said: "Being in the Royal Navy and helping out the community is one of the best things."

The area, now known as Elwell Woods, was originally used to store construction plant for the road bridge over the River Tamar.

It was closed to the public and forgotten about for over 50 years, until the project giving it a new lease of life was started in 2009.

A grant from the National Lottery helped to transform the neglected wasteland into two acres of community woodland with the iconic Cornish Cross forming the centrepiece of the project.



Feeling the heat

MEMBERS of the Hele's School Combined Cadet Force tackle a fire during a visit to HMS Raleigh in Torpoint. The Navy section of the school's CCF spent a day at the establishment training in the state-of-the-art simulators used to teach sailors how to deal with emergencies at sea. Cadet Morgan, 15, who joined the CCF to find out what life in the Forces would be, said: "My dad was in the Navy for 22 years and I'd like to be an engineering Officer." CCF schools liaison officer CPO Carol Strong said: "This is about improving the cadet experience and exposing them to as many Ministry of Defence assets as we can. It helps them with their team-work and leadership. It challenges them and gets them out of their comfort zone and generally improves their maturity."

Picture: Dave Sherfield



Cadets get stuck in

BUILDING benches and clearing overgrowth were just a few of the tasks undertaken by a group of Officer Cadets from Oxford URNU.

Over the course of a school day, a team of OCdts lent their time to Larkrise Primary School to assist in the building of a secluded area in the playground.

The team quickly set to work building benches and setting fence-posts while another group of OCs and the Unit Coxswain, CPO Gary Maskell, put an admirable effort into digging through the cold ground, in order to set a number of posts that would act as the guiding plots for the eventual linked fence to be constructed around it.

The cadets put on a small demonstration of dressing on parade, standing to attention and saluting for the pupils. This culminated in a short, instructive presentation given by OC Luke Harris during which the children were taught how to salute.

The Oxford URNU members that took part were: CPO Gary Maskell, Mid Emily O'Donovan, OCs Emily Herbert, Luke Harris, Tom Murphy, Harry Williams, Umar Ahmed, Matt Kirtley and Jackson Cooper-Driver.



Navy photographer takes Army prize



THIS photograph of Chelsea Pensioners paying their respects at the Cenotaph in London earned a Royal Navy photographer a prize in the Army Photographic Competition.

PO Owen Cooban, 39, pictured left, won the

inaugural Op Camera category in the annual contest.

The father of two, who joined the photographic branch in 2001, said: "It's a real privilege to be able to travel the world – it offers up such fantastic opportunities that lead to some great photographs."

Jack, the last Boy Sailor, leaves RN

LIEUTENANT Commander Jack Kerr has retired after 45 years in the Royal Navy.

Jack joined the Senior Service at HMS Ganges as a Junior Seaman 2nd Class in November 1972.

He is the last Boy Sailor still serving who joined at the age of 15.

"How can one express or put into words what a fantastic, enjoyable and rewarding career I have had?" he said.

"Yes it has, as with most careers, its ups and downs but on looking back you tend to remember the excellent times, the runs ashore, places visited and of course your shipmates."

"There are not many careers where you get to have a new set of friends after every ship/shore base you join."

Jack has many highlights from his career, including his first ship, HMS Eskimo, which deployed to



● Lt Cdr Jack Kerr, right, receives the Volunteer Reserves Service Medal from Cdr Trefor Fox, OC Warfare Support Training Group

the Caribbean for nine months.

"I had to dress as an Inuit Indian standing on the bridge for entering/leaving harbour in 80 degrees," he said.

Jack also recalls the Cod War in 76, the firemen's strike the

following year, then various ships and shore establishments ranging from Leanders, 42s, 21s, CVSs, 23s, HMY Britannia, HMS Rooke and BMATT team in Antigua (WI) before finishing at HMS Collingwood in the

International & Commonwealth Training Section.

"I have had a fantastic and wonderful time in the RN and I am really proud to have served the Queen and country."

"Also, having the full support of my family has made the journey that much easier, especially the love and support from my wife Kim, who with her patience and understanding has made my career a true adventure."

"It really has been a wonderful period in both our lives and I couldn't have done it or achieved what I have today without her love and encouragement and for that I will be eternally grateful."

Jack and his wife, along with their two Jack Russells, are looking to spend their retirement exploring the UK and Ireland in their motor home.

"Then, depending on my navigation, we may do Europe," added Jack.

Longest-serving female in RNR marks 40 years

LITTLE did 19-year-old Evadne Gordon know, when she joined the Royal Naval Reserves on March 31 1977, that 40 years later she would still be serving.

CPO Gordon, 59, was both the first person from her family to be born in the UK, after her parents moved from Jamaica in the 1950s, and the first to join the Armed Forces.

Now Evadne is celebrating becoming the longest-serving female member of the Royal Naval Reserves, and she has no intentions of hanging up her uniform just yet.

Back when she first joined as a Wren after responding to a newspaper advert and attending a selection interview, *Star Wars* had only just been released, James

Callaghan was Prime Minister, Abba topped the charts with *Knowing Me Knowing You*, and female Naval Reserves were not allowed to carry weapons or serve aboard a ship.

Of course, a lot has changed in the four decades since, with Reserves now fully integrated into the Armed Forces and for the first time since they were able to join the military a century ago, women are able to serve on the front line and do all the jobs that their male colleagues can.

"The changes have been really positive, women are now treated equally. I wasn't allowed to serve at sea or carry arms when I joined, but now there are no limits to what we are able to do," said CPO Gordon.

Her long career has included parading during the Lord Mayor of London's show, stints training hundreds of officers and personnel in Hong Kong, Gibraltar, Dubai, and Portugal in addition to the UK, and she was also responsible for sending and receiving transmissions from Royal Navy ships around the world.

In 2012, she was part of the welcoming party for the Queen during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations for the Royal barge's arrival at HMS President, where she still serves in the Operations (HQ) Branch, and in the early eighties even met the Queen Mother.

"Back when I joined, Wrens could only sign up for three years, so I thought I would give it a go and see where it led

to," she said.

"It just seemed like an interesting thing to do. I never planned to stay for 40 years, but each time I had the opportunity to extend I did. I am still in and have just put in for another extension."

"I have had a fantastic time. It's worthwhile, and very interesting. They always say that you get out of it as much as you put in. It's hard work, but it's so rewarding, and you meet some very interesting people."

In addition to her military work, Evadne, now a grandmother, also holds down two civilian jobs—one at the Queen Mary University in an administrative role and the other at the Jamma Umoja residential family assessment centre in Bromley.





Serious message behind fun run

PROUD Navy wife Victoria Wilson celebrates with her husband, CPO Neil. Who is dressed as a hound. As you do.

The pair – well, Victoria mostly – organised a fun run to raise awareness and money for Type 1 diabetes.

Three years ago their then six-year-old daughter Shylae was diagnosed with the insulin-dependant condition.

Shylae loves to run, so it was decided a fun run would be the way to go to raise funds for Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and Seahawks diabetes group.

The event was held at Gosport Leisure Centre and attracted support from local businesses.

Donations of fruit, bottles of water and cereal bars were all given to create that end-of-race reward and refuelling opportunity. In addition to all this, every runner is presented a personalised medal when they cross the finish line.

JDRF received every penny of the £5 entry fee, and all monies raised on the day went to Seahawks. This involved a cake stall, raffle, games, face paints, gazebo photo-booth, tattoos and the like. The event raised a good sum of money for both charities – a total of £854.02 with still more money to come.

The leisure centre's mascot Pooch, aka Neil Wilson, of HMS Defender, turned up, along with firefighters from Gosport Fire Station. Around 82 children took part in the run, opting for one, two or three miles.

Next year's event will be held at the same venue on Saturday October 13 2018. Details will be posted at <https://www.facebook.com/events/798245457010796/?ti=icl>

Sea what we did

WE don't normally publish cheque presentations, but as the participants in this photo made the effort to travel nine miles out to sea, we'll make an exception.

HMS Dasher donated £166 to the Children's Hospice South West – the crew's adopted charity.

The money was raised during the Easter and summer URNU deployments at events such as Armed Forces Day in Liverpool, Belfast and Bristol Maritime festivals and other smaller opportunities throughout the trip.

The crew opened the ship to the public with URNU students providing guided tours and explaining the role of the P2000 craft.

Pictured presenting the cheque – at sea off the Eddystone Lighthouse – are, back row, from left, LET Richard David, AB Mathew Crichton, CHSW representative Dave Whitfield and CPO Troye Funnell. Front, from left, CPO Stephen Shaw and guest John Smith.



Both Princes are on track

"FULL steam ahead and a full head of steam," declared Lt Cdr David Wright as he summed up both HMS Prince of Wales' and the Prince of Wales steam locomotive's build programmes at the 25th convention of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust in Darlington.

The First Lieutenant of HMS Prince of Wales and its Propulsion Engineer Officer Lt Alex Chenery were in attendance to launch a bond of friendship between the ship and locomotive.

Asides from being namesakes, both projects share many more similarities, including both being second of class.

The ship is following hot on the heels of HMS Queen Elizabeth, and the locomotive is looking to accompany her older sister Tornado, which has been running on the Network Rail mainline track since 2008.

"Both projects are overcoming significant engineering challenges" observed Lt Chenery as he was guided through the Darlington Locomotive Works.

He added: "It is incredible to see the merging of new technology with the original design. Complying with all the modern safety regulations whilst keeping the spirit of steam alive is a careful balance, and they've struck it perfectly here."

David Elliott, Director of Engineering for the steam locomotive, outlined their philosophy: "We are building the train that Sir Nigel Gresley (the original designer) would have built if he'd had access to today's technology."

Of particular note was the updating of the 'stink-bomb'. This was a vial set to explode at a specific temperature releasing aniseed to warn the driver of a failing big-end. It has now



evolved into an electronic bluetooth sensor, transmitting accurate data to a mobile phone.

The Prince of Wales steam locomotive is a modernised replica of the class P2 2-8-2 'Mikado' locomotive, which were the most powerful passenger steam engines to operate in the UK.

They were designed by Gresley to haul 600-ton trains on the arduous Edinburgh to Aberdeen route. The design was never fully developed and was scrapped by 1961 with diesel engines being preferred.

To mark the official launch

of the bond of friendship a ship's crest was exchanged for a painting by renowned railway artist Chris Ludlow featuring both No. 2007 Prince of Wales with No 60163 Tornado.

Receiving the crest, David Champion, President of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, said: "Both HMS Prince of Wales and No 2007 Prince of Wales truly represent the best of British engineering."

Lt Chenery is looking to develop the relationship by sending marine engineers down to Darlington to help with the construction of the engine.



Milestone for Ben in Caribbean

FLEET Air Arm pilot Lt Cdr Ben Brazenall notched up his 3,000th flying hour while on a humanitarian aid mission to the hurricane-devastated island of Dominica.

Ben joined the Royal Navy in 2002 and since gaining his Wings in 2005 he has spent the majority of his career on the Commando Helicopter Force flying Sea King Mk4 and Merlin Mk3.

He passed the All Arms Commando Course in 2007, earning him the privilege of wearing the green beret, and quickly gained a great deal of operational experience over seven flying tours in Iraq and Afghanistan before specialising as a helicopter instructor.

After teaching new pilots at the Defence Helicopter Flying School for three years, he returned to the front line to teach on the Merlin Mk3, a role which has seen him involved in environmental training in Norway and California, as well as developing pilots to operate in the challenging Maritime Counter Terrorism flight.

Having been recently promoted, he now assumes the Training Officer position on 845 Naval Air Squadron and has a busy diary over the next two years, including preparing the squadron for operating from HMS Queen Elizabeth.

He lives with his wife Caroline and two children in Somerset and has developed a triathlon habit – despite an aversion to lycra.

It's blooming marvellous

GARDENERS at HMS Collingwood helped the base pick up medals in two Britain in Bloom contests.

The establishment won silver in the South and South East in Bloom and gold in the Fareham in Bloom contests.

Judges were impressed by several projects, such as gardens and barbecue areas created around offices, as well as the planting of thousands of spring bulbs.

The work was sparked by the base's Honey Bee project, when a hive was placed at the base.

Whistlestop training tour

A DELEGATION from the Kenyan Navy visited the Royal Navy's training facilities in the South and South West of England to see how the Service trains its people for operations.

The visits to Britannia Royal Naval College, HMS Raleigh, HMS Sultan and HMS Collingwood were designed to show the Kenyan military how coaching and mentoring techniques are used by the Royal Navy.

The Kenyan delegation was also briefed on how the training is mapped to civilian-accredited degree courses, apprenticeships and other qualifications.

At BRNC the delegation was given a brief on the 30-week initial naval training course for officers. They also visited the Royal Naval Leadership Academy to hear about the range of specialist courses teaching different leadership and management techniques.

Moving on to HMS Raleigh, in Cornwall, the visitors were shown around an accommodation block where recruits live during their basic training course in rooms of 30.

They were given an outline of the recruit training programme and also visited the multi-million pound simulators used to teach fire-fighting, techniques to deal with floods at sea and first-aid training.

The facilities at HMS Raleigh, providing maritime survival techniques, are replicated at HMS Phoenix in Portsmouth.

In the Portsmouth area the Kenyan delegation visited HMS Collingwood to see the computerised training systems which are used to train officers and ratings specialising in warfare. They also visited HMS

Sultan, to look at marine and air engineering.

The Royal Navy regularly hosts visitors from foreign navies and defence forces to share its training methods. The visit was part of the Defence engagement programme with the Kenyan Defence Forces, under the bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement.

The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

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Ski sundae results in plenty of charity cash

A GROUP of Royal Navy skiers have completed a gruelling 24-hour world record attempt in order to raise money for the RNRMC.

The team took to the Gloucester Dry Ski Slope on with the aim of skiing from 5pm to 5pm the next day. The distance that the group aimed to ski would break the world record for distance skied on an artificial slope.

Despite initial problems with the ski slope's drag lift, the Royal Navy skiers got off to a flying start.

Supported on their first leg by Paralympic skier Millie Knight and her guide, Royal Marine Brett Wild, the team were given encouragement as they carved into the night.

Supplied with coffee and food throughout by the Gloucester Ski Centre, the team pushed through until morning without stopping.

Leading up to the finish line, the ski slope played host to a number of spectators, local news stations and the famous faces of Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards and Gloucester rugby stars Ben Morgan and Lloyd Evans.

Individual skier Phil Fordham managed to smash the individual record for distance skied on a

dry-slope followed by his fellow skiers; LAET Tom Horst, CPOPTI Sarah Colclough, LNN Laura Davis, LNN Laura Martin, Lt Imogen Reilly, Lt Marion Taylor and CPL Elliot Underwood.

LAET Tom Horst said: "I think we all knew it was going to be difficult. The worst part was going up on the button lift. Each lap was two-and-a-half minutes on the lift which added up to approximately 13hrs.

"That was the worst bit, topped up with rain in the early hours. More rain followed in the morning which meant most people had boots full of water for eight hours."

However, despite the event being difficult, the team were proud of the effort put in. LAET Horst said:

"There is a huge sense of satisfaction amongst the team. Everyone can hold their heads up high in what was a monumental effort. Ultimately, it was about making money for the RNRMC we are pleased to have achieved."

After 24 hours of skiing the team finished their challenge, falling just short of the Guinness World Record. However, the team managed to raise over £1,500 for the RNRMC.

Dan's the man

ET wins top innovation award

A TALENTED Engineering Technician has been awarded the Herbert Lott Innovation and Invention Award for pioneering a ground-breaking mapping system on-board HMS Queen Elizabeth.

ET WE Daniel Gibbs received the award after creating an advanced network monitoring and defect identification capability which allows Network Group and duty weapon engineers to identify real-time issues with the Internal Network Electronic Infrastructure.

Created in 1930, the Herbert Lott Naval Trust Fund was established in order to recognise those in the Naval Service who have significantly improved the way in which the Naval and Royal Marines forces operate.

Now administered by the RNRMC, the funding of the award is distributed throughout the year to outstanding members of the Fleet.

The enhancement made to HMS Queen Elizabeth will enable the UK's largest warship to better monitor the Network Management System (NMS), which controls more than 900 network devices aboard the ship.

In using his initiative to build a simple user interface for the NMS, ET Gibbs created a system that will rapidly identify network issues and improve the functionality of the carrier.

Senior Weapons Engineer Lt Cdr Simon Blois said: "ET Gibbs thoroughly deserves his Herbert Lott award. His enduring contribution towards HMS Queen Elizabeth and the establishment of a user-friendly way

of monitoring the network infrastructure is entirely unique.

"He stands out as an excellent example to all our engineering technicians within the ship and the Royal Navy."

CPO Matt Whitehead, the Networks Group Head, was equally effusive, saying: "ET Gibbs has created a vital tool that will be utilised across both the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers, ensuring a lasting legacy which will endure."

Over the last ten years, the RNRMC has allocated the award's prize money to a number of adept Service people.

Past winners of the Herbert Lott award have been recognised for a number of achievements, including the compilation of HMS Dragon's Duty Watch roster, a Personnel Management Information Exploitation Project and the creation of a three-fold leaflet that increased the aviation community's awareness to flight safety at Plymouth.

ET Gibbs said: "I am proud to have been able to work on the Navy's most advanced warship during her build phase and make a lasting contribution to the nation's flagship."

"Contributing by making use of my IT skills, while working alongside industry partners and balancing my day to day commitments as a WE has been a difficult but an extremely rewarding challenge."

To nominate a member of the Naval Service for the Herbert Lott Award, contact mygrant@rnrmc.org.uk



Riders raising funds

RECORD numbers of spectators turned out to witness the historic Edinburgh Riding of the Marches.

The ride saw approximately 25,000 people lining the cobbled Edinburgh streets to witness more than 280 horses traversing the Royal Mile.

The yearly ride is a spectacular re-enactment of the return of the Captain of the Trained Band to Edinburgh, following the news of defeat at the battle of Flodden in 1513.

Having returned in 2009 after a break of more than 60 years, the Riding of the Marches has already become one of Edinburgh's most colourful annual events.

Each year, the elected Edinburgh Captain and Lass lead the horses and their riders up the Royal Mile and on towards Mercat Cross, before returning the city flag to the Lord Provost.

As the official charity partner of the ride, the RNRMC were present throughout the day, showing their support for the riders while raising money for sailors, marines and their families.

With committed volunteers lining the city's streets collecting donations and a successful dinner auction in the evening, the event raised over £3,000.



Cheers for the cakes



PERSONNEL at RNAS Culdrose swapped helicopters for mixing bowls to raise money for local charities.

824 NAS hosted a *Bake-Off*-style event, followed by a cake and coffee morning.

Driving force behind the event was CPO(ACMN) Shona Smith, who said: "The morning was a great success and it was brilliant fun raising money for Heidi's Quest and the RNRMC."

The cakes were judged by Oli Kiss and Chloe Crimmen from the Slice of Cornwall tea room.

Among the creations was a beer cake by PO(ACMN) Jamie Strachan, pictured left, which won second place.

Officer marks retirement with 5,500-mile trek



● Cdr Allen with husband Frank beside HMS Victory

A COMMANDER with the Royal Naval Reserve has chosen to spend the first year of her retirement taking on a gruelling 5,500-mile charity walk around mainland Britain's coastline.

Cdr Jane Allen, who is soon to end a 37-year career, marked the beginning of her Victory Walk outside Admiral Nelson's flagship, HMS Victory, in Portsmouth.

Travelling anti-clockwise around the coastline, Jane started the first leg of her solo long-distance walk in Portsmouth and will continue around mainland UK.

The Victory Walk will continue throughout 2017 and 2018, aiming to raise money for the RNRMC and the Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust.

Cdr Allen joined the Service when the Women's Royal Naval Service was separate from the Royal Navy, so the WRNS BT was a charity that also had an obvious affinity with her.

Wishing Jane well on behalf of WRNS BT, Cdr Andrea Crook said: "Commander Jane Allen is a long time supporter of the WRNS Benevolent Trust and has also been a key player in ensuring the success of WRNS100, a project which this year is marking 100 years since the formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1917."

"The members of the Trust will be closely monitoring her progress around the UK and we all wish her every success in this ambitious project."

Cdr Allen, who is supported by her husband, former Royal Marine, Frank, will aim to complete the challenge and return to Portsmouth by October next year. The final leg will see Jane return to do her final miles around Portsmouth and finish at HMS Victory.

Cdr Allen said: "Having had a long Naval Service and being closely involved with the WRNS100 centenary year, selecting the

RNRMC and WRNS BT charities was the obvious choice. Between us, Frank and I, have almost 70 years' service in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, from Aden to Afghanistan. The Victory walk seemed a good way of marking the end of my career, taking on a year's challenge and 'giving back'."

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock said: "I'd like to wish Commander Jane Allen the best of luck with her coastal walk for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. As she prepares to retire from the Royal Naval Reserve, Jane is bravely throwing herself in at the deep end again to raise money for the principal charity of the Royal Navy and the WRNS Benevolent Trust."

To support Cdr Allen on her challenge, visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18>.



Halls of fame for Mr Safety

SAFETY isn't Ryan 'Nobby' Halls' middle name... but it should be, for the Norfolk sailor lives, eats, breathes and sleeps to ensure his HMS Westminster shipmates are safe at work.

The 31-year-old petty officer has been singled out for his safety-conscious efforts aboard the Portsmouth-based frigate, efforts which helped the warship out of a massive refit and back to front-line service.

He is Westminster's 'chief bosun's mate' – the sailor in charge of seamanship, the safe operation of the ship's fast sea boats and rope work when berthing or leaving port.

Since joining the ship, he's effectively re-written the safety manual covering huge swathes of day-to-day living and working aboard Westminster – going far beyond his remit as the buffer – attracting the attention of staff at Navy headquarters on Whale Island.

They've now singled him out for a Sea Guardian award – presented to sailors or Royal Marines who have gone out of their way to promote safety and prevent accidents.

They say Ryan's work aboard Westminster "set him apart from his peers" while the man himself possesses "commitment and evident ability"... all of which has ensured that on his ship "a consistent positive and safe environment" prevails.

The former Charles Burrell High School pupil has spent a decade in the Royal Navy, particularly enjoying a lengthy deployment to the Far East in 2008 with HMS Kent and a stint on counter-piracy patrol off Somalia with HMS Lancaster, during which time the ship seized modern-day pirates and their weaponry.

Of his Sea Guardian recognition he said: "I am very pleased to receive this award on behalf of my team in the seamanship department onboard HMS Westminster."

When not at sea or thinking of ways of improving safety onboard, Ryan spends time with his wife Tiffany and the couple's two young daughters, two-year-old Sienna and Sadie, aged just ten months. The sailor also finds time to enjoy rugby, American football and fly fishing.

Acquaint idea

TWO dozen ratings – from AB to WO – toured BRNC in Dartmouth, the first of a new series of acquaint visits for sailors hoping to join the Officer Corps.

New tours of the Dartmouth institution have been organised with dedicated programmes run three times a year for groups of potential SUYs, Upper Yardmen (UY) and Candidates for the Wardroom (CW) three times each year.

Further information and details on booking an acquaint visit can be found at <http://defenceintranet.dif.rmil.uk/libraries/corporate/DINStraining/2017/ew2017DIN07-075.pdf>



● WO1 Nick Sharland – the Warrant Office Naval Service – chats with junior ratings at the fourth annual all-ranks dinner aboard HMS Victory
Picture: LPhoto Iggy Roberts, FRPU East

Victory has its rewards

SAILORS and Royal Marines of all ages and ranks dined in style aboard the world's most famous warship – reward for their efforts over the past 12 months.

Some 98 men and women who had gone above and beyond the ordinary call of duty were invited to join Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock and the Chief of Joint Operations Vice Admiral Tim Fraser for a Trafalgar dinner aboard HMS Victory in Portsmouth.

Celebration of the RN's most famous battle is observed by

the Officer Corps with a dinner on the night of the clash's anniversary.

More recently, senior ratings and WOs have celebrated their forebears' contribution to victory with Pickle Night in early November.

More junior personnel rarely have the chance to gain an insight into this part of our maritime history so, for the past few years, the RN has introduced the mixed-rank dinner to build a greater understanding of the past and foster naval ethos.

All 98 diners had been nominated by their commanding

officers for their outstanding efforts, dedication and commitment to the Naval Service.

Guests posed for a group photograph as a memento, followed by a reception on the upper gun deck and then, after a Royal Marines bugler sounded the 'Call to Dinner', sat down on Victory's lower gun deck for a traditional Beef Wellington, followed by sticky toffee pudding for dessert.

There was the highest calibre of music from the jazz quartet of the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Portsmouth... and rather more raucous singing courtesy of old-school sea shanties.

The event was made possible by a grant from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

"When the charity was approached to support the evening's celebrations it was an easy decision – I am delighted to offer congratulations to all who have been invited to the historic ship on this memorable evening," said RNRMC Chief Executive Robert Robson.

"Where better to signal our desire to mark the excellence, flair and dash in today's Service than in the week that we remember a man for whom these were his trademarks?"



The Great British Fake Off

NO TENT in a field. No Paul Hollywood. But plenty of cakes. And innuendo. And 'Mary Berry'.

Baking-minded matelots from across Portsmouth – staff from Victory Building, West Battery, 2nd MCM Squadron, Nelson UPO, MASST and MCTA – responded to a plea to help LWtr Dale Parker raise money for MS sufferers.

Dale, who works in the personnel promotions office, is running the London Marathon next spring.

To kick-start his fund-raising efforts, colleagues in his section decided to host a bake off with 13 folk responding to the call for cakes.

With the cakes neatly arrayed, all that was needed was a judge.

Step forward 'Mary Berry' (better known as Steve Gibbs, who's customer liaison in the Old Sail Loft when not wearing a dubious blonde wig).

'Mary' decided that a beautifully-decorated coffee and walnut sponge cake produced by Jayne Leith in the officer promotions section was the finest offering of the day.

LWtr Chrissie Faulkner from the ratings team came second with her microwave 'baked' production, and LWtr Sarah Corlett, also from ratings section, took the wooden spoon for her self-titled 'council house cupcakes'.

The biggest winner, however, was Dale, who collected £288.58 for MS-UK.



Merlin's spell of bad weather

WHAT the bloody hell are we doing here in this weather?...

A couple of air engineers from 824 Naval Air Squadron brave the elements as a civilian helicopter shares the flight deck of RFA Argus with one of their Merlins while rookie aircrew and maintainers are blooded in the art of naval aviation.

An 88-strong detachment of air and ground crew from 824 NAS took three Merlin Mk2 helicopters aboard Argus for four weeks of flying, first off Cornwall, then in wilder waters off the Hebrides.

The goal was to qualify five pilots, four observers (navigator/ weapons specialists) and five aircrewmen (weapons specialists/ winchmen) in the art of landing and taking off at sea, refuelling without touching down on the deck of the aviation training ship, shifting loads slung beneath the 14-tonne helicopter, before moving on to 40 hours of submarine hunting and three dozen hours of tracking down surface ships.

The latter two strands of the training were greatly assisted by Argus' presence at the autumn Joint Warrior exercise, the twice-yearly UK-led war games staged in Scotland and off its west coast.

The latest incarnation of the fortnight-long exercise gave the trainee fliers 35 ships, aircraft and helicopters to play with – and allowed them to develop some of the skills and tactics they'll use to protect new carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

824 is the training squadron for the entire 'grey' (submarine hunting rather than 'green' commando carrying) Merlin force, providing qualified pilots, observers and engineers for squadrons assigned to the UK's aircraft carriers (820 and 814) and flights operating from Type 23 frigates (829 NAS).

The four weeks with Argus were essential for aircrew earning their wings – being qualified to fly on front-line duties – giving them real assets and conditions to train in rather than the hi-tech simulators at Culdrose... and giving rookie engineers and technicians their own baptism of fire, learning how to look after a helicopter in a pitching, rolling ship with limited facilities compared with a hangar on land.

"The embarkation in RFA Argus was a resounding success for the squadron's Sea Flight," said Lt Cdr Roger Angliss, who led the 88-strong team of men and women.

"The aircrew encountered the full range of sea conditions from the benign to Sea State 7 – 20ft waves – and above in storm-force weather conditions."

"I'm very proud of the flight's achievements – from the staff and student perspectives, yes, but especially from my engineers, who kept the Merlins available for over 150 hours of flying throughout the entire four-week spell."

Before the grey Merlins of 824, the green Mk3s of 846 NAS with the first Jungle Merlin pilots plucked straight from training were aboard Argus to earn their at-sea stripes.

Having qualified the aircrew in deck operations, a busy schedule saw the remainder of the two weeks spent conducting training in secondary roles: moving stores via underslung load, winching and Helicopter In-Flight Refuelling (HIFR) – hovering over the flight deck with a fuel line attached, the first time this process has been performed on a CHF Merlin.

The deployment culminated in an amphibious assault exercise, launched from Argus on to the hills of Dartmoor including a low-level formation flight up the River Dart, before the 846 team returned to base in Somerset.

Seoulmates for Tidesurge

THE Navy's newest tanker has her first 'friend' after signing a 'bond of sisterhood' with a Korean warship.

For the rest of their lives the brand-new frigate ROKS Daegu and support ship RFA Tidesurge will follow each other's progress, share ideas, cultures and experiences.

Having been built side-by-side at the DSME Shipyard in South Korea, the respective crews of the two vessels have watched each other's ships take shape over the past couple of years; the craft were even launched within two days of each other.

As a result a friendship has grown between the two ship's companies, a friendship the South Koreans wished to cement with a formal sisterhood ceremony – a long-standing tradition in the Asian country.

That ceremony began with a film for the Brits on a history of the Korean Navy – only formed in 1945, but now 170 ships and 70,000 sailors strong.

And the Koreans learned about the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, life aboard its ships and some of the recent humanitarian missions RFA vessels like Mounts Bay have been involved in.

Despite the very different ship types – and the distance between the UK and South Korea – the two navies do operate together fairly frequently,

chiefly in the Indian Ocean in the ongoing effort to strangle terrorism/smuggling/drug trafficking.

Following the signing, a Tidesurge XI – bolstered by younger and fresher legs from the DE&S project team who are overseeing the Tide-class project in Okpo-dong – beat a Korean Navy football side by the odd goal.

The sisterhood day ended with a Korean barbecue dinner, which gave the RFA sailors a chance to understand a little of Korean culture and etiquette and appreciate the Korean love of karaoke.

"The sisterhood ceremony between Daegu and Tidesurge was a special occasion for two ships starting life together in the same yard, building together for the future," said the RFA vessel's Chief Officer Andy Ford.

"In this tradition two ships form a lifelong relationship based on mutual respect, a wish to learn about one another's culture and to strengthen the bond between our two nations."

Tidesurge is the third of four large Tide-class tankers built to resupply Queen Elizabeth-class carriers and their battlegroups. Tidespring is on trials around the UK, Tiderace is being fitted with UK military kit in Falmouth and Tideforce is in the later stages of fitting out. As for Tidesurge, she's undergoing trials off the Korean peninsula.



FAA's higher learning

NAVAL aircrewman and air traffic controllers can join their pilot and observer counterparts adding letters to their name with degrees awarded in the new year.

A link-up between the Fleet Air Arm and the Open University means successful trainee ATCs will be able to earn a Foundation Degree in Airspace Management from January.

And from April, aircrewman should be joining them with similar qualifications in Aviation Systems Management.

The RN joined forces with the OU back in 2013, offering foundation degrees – roughly the equivalent of two thirds of a BA/BSc/B.Ed – to pilots and observers, initially in military aviation studies, since March 2016 in aviation systems management. They can receive a full honours degree after successfully submitting a number of pieces of written work about flight, general Naval knowledge and pass an oral board. The grade they earn depends on the level of success with their Certificate of Competency – awarded when aircrew are fully trained and ready for front-line duties.

The goal is to upgrade the new ATC/aircrewman qualifications to honours degrees in due course.

One of the first Air Traffic Controllers in line for a degree is Lt Chris Borthwick, based at Culdrose (pictured above). As a non-graduate he is delighted that he will be receiving his degree with no personal financial burden.

"It has been hard work to reach this stage, but it is great to have academic recognition for all the military and air traffic controlling training I have done. We are just waiting for the final endorsement from the Open University."

Saints and winners

HMS St Albans' visit to London back in March may have been relatively short... but the frigate milked it for all was worth.

International Women's Day, the 100th anniversary of women joining the Naval Service, and National Apprenticeship Week all fell during the Type 23's four days in the capital.

Instead of holding a media facility, BBC Radio 1 Newsbeat reported live from the ship while at sea. They produced a three-minute video/radio package seen by millions and *Good Morning Britain* broadcast repeatedly from the Saint on International Women's Day.

On the final day, a Facebook Live video of a morning outdoor PT session with an International Women's Day theme reached more than two million people.

For this exposure and other engagement/publicity efforts, the ship's visit was named Campaign of the Month (for two months running) by the government's communications arm as a shining example of maximising PR opportunities and reaching audiences the Navy wouldn't normally hit.



USN's birthday card(board)

BECAUSE nothing says '242nd birthday of the world's largest Navy' better than two blokes in cardboard boxes patched up with gaffer tape paddling across a swimming pool...

Gulf-based Brits let their hair down with their American cousins in the pool at the Naval Support Activity Bahrain – the huge facility which is home to the RN and US Navies based in the kingdom – to mark the USN's anniversary.

Thousands of personnel were invited to take part in the Cardboard Boat Regatta... but only a few brave/skilful/foolish souls rose to the challenge: design and build a boatw capable of completing two lengths of the fitness centre pool. The only boatbuilding materials allowed were corrugated cardboard and masking tape.

The UKMCC Logistics Department entered two teams: 'Bowser's Battleship' crewed by PO(Wtr) Kat Chivers and LWtr Maxine Cooper and 'Maid of Cardboard' crewed by Lt Edward Bean and Sgt Ryan Coult (RAF), while a combined US-UK team of Capt Tim McAllister USN and Lt Cdr Joe Currin RN took to the water in 'Al Badr' ('Full Moon').

Their creation proved to be the most 'poolworthy' of the 12 boats entered, narrowly winning the contest despite shipping a lot of water.

An American team took the 'Titanic Award' for a craft which disintegrated and sank after just half a length, while 'Maid of Cardboard' and 'Bowser's Battleship' were both defeated in the heats.

LWtr Cooper said: "It was a really fun and relaxed event that allowed us to integrate more fully with our US colleagues."

Her shipmate PO Chivers added: "I enjoyed using my spare time to design and build 'Bowser's Battleship'. Despite being apprehensive before the race, I've thoroughly enjoyed taking part."

GOOD ol' Royal. They know you can't have a birthday without birthday cake.

Sgt Ray and new Deputy Commandant General RM Brig Haydn White prepare to plunge a large knife into the cake produced to mark the 353rd anniversary of the Corps.

HMS Excellent-based Royal Marines – commandos and musicians – gathered by the cenotaph in the courtyard of West Battery, formerly HQ RM, in glorious autumnal sunshine to mark the milestone.

"In view of the fact that all the Royal Marines on Whale Island can rarely get together at the same time this is a great opportunity to celebrate the birthday of the Corps with the new Deputy Commandant General," said WO2 Wayne Rogers.

Picture: LPhoto Sean Gascoigne



Naval Families FEDERATION

AT THE NFF we deal with an array of questions from families about aspects of operations and deployments.

The hottest topic at present is the Family Welfare Grant. What is it for? The grant helps ships, submarines and units provide welfare support and enhanced communication to families of Service personnel deployed on operations. The grant is currently £4.40 per week for each serving member of the ship/submarine or unit that are eligible for the Deployed Welfare Package.

FWG is only available while a Service person is on an operational deployment (continuous maritime deployment of eight weeks or more), not for those serving in different locations. For example, it does not cover those whose home is Glasgow and 40th the Falklands or Gibraltar. This is because these deployments are given Local Overseas Allowance (LOA) and are therefore not eligible for FWG. Royal Marines deployments when not at sea also receive this allowance, so generally they do not receive FWG.

The fund is requested through the ship/submarine or unit by a designated member of the ship's company. It is their job to canvass the ship/submarine or unit on the best way the funds can be spent.

They then apply to Navy Command (NCHQ) for authority to spend the grant, or they can liaise with their local RNRW Welfare community development officer to set up events, who will then apply to NCHQ for authority to do so.

In previous years base port events were the main request for the grant; in recent years however, as Naval families are increasingly dispersed throughout the country, this has meant that ships have started to fund vouchers for restaurants or leisure days for families to provide a little respite or a treat for them while away.

The money for the FWG is provided from the public purse, so as taxpayers' money Corporate Governance must be obtained before it's spent. Navy Command ensures the requests meet with approved expenditure and approved allocation. All are encouraged to apply for the grant throughout the deployment; the spirit in which it is intended is to support the families whilst their loved ones are deployed, rather than on a homecoming or pre-deployment event.

Examples of how the FWG can be spent are:

- Subsidising the cost of family activities for separated families of deployed personnel (such as restaurants, cinema tickets, theme parks, zoos, local attractions etc), providing that all vouchers/tickets issued to family members are redeemed while the entitled Service person is deployed and separated;
- Provision of authorised hired group transport for attendance at family briefings/meetings;
- Provision of non-alcoholic refreshments and food for family members at unit-organised briefings/meetings related to the deployment, including pre-deployment briefs and homecomings.

To contact the NFF, visit www.NFF.org.uk, e-mail contactus@nff.org.uk or phone 02392 654374.

Where to look

DINs

01 Personnel

DIN 2017DIN01-169: QJAR and SJAR – Definition of Merit for Promotion
DIN 2017DIN01-170: Armed Forces Pension Scheme 1975 Revised Representative Rate
DIN 2017DIN01-173: Opportunities for Defence Medical Services personnel to serve with the UK Special Forces Medical Group (UKSF Med Gp)
DIN 2017DIN01-176: BRd 3 Vol 1 - Issue of October 2017 Edition
DIN 2017DIN01-178: Term Time Absence Guidance

04 Equipment, Support and Estate

DIN 2017DIN04-167: Information Systems and Services (ISS) Change of Contract Arrangements for Support of Maritime MultiMedia

07 Training & Education

DIN 2017DIN07-107: Instructions for the All Arms Commando Course (AACC)
DIN 2017DIN07-109: Tri-Service University Short Course Programme - Academic Year 2017/2018
DIN 2017DIN07-110: Nuclear Department Course Dates Mar 18 - Mar 19
DIN 2017DIN07-112: Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) Basic Military Acquisit Course (Air 338)
DIN 2017DIN07-113: Nijmegen Marches 2018
DIN 2017DIN07-115: Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Conference, RAF Brize Norton, 7 Mar 18
DIN 2017DIN07-116: Expedition Slots at the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre in 2018
DIN 2017DIN07-118: Maritime Warfare School: Aviation Responsible Officer (AVRO) – 2018 Course Dates
DIN 2017DIN07-119: Institute of Naval Medicine courses 1 Apr 18-31 Mar 19
DIN 2017DIN07-121: QARANC Regular Military Nurse Practitioner Education, Training and Management

09 Honours, Awards, Royal and Ceremonial Events

DIN 2017DIN09-017: Battle Honours for the Post-War Reconstruction Phase of Operation Telic
DIN 2017DIN09-018: Battle Honours for Operation Defiance and Operation Ellamy
DIN 2017DIN09-019: Nige Prouse Award RNTMs

01 Personnel

RNTM 01-065/17 Naval Careers Service (NCS) entry criteria
RNTM 01-066/17 Offering RN and RM assets for charity prizes at auction
RNTM 01-068/17 Creation and Operation of the Accelerated Technician Authority
RNTM 01-069/17 BR1750a Medical Standards for Entry to Service in Submarines – Minimum Height

ASK YOURSELF:

- Were you made in the Royal Navy?
- Do you want to give others the opportunity to make it in the Royal Navy?
- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

If the answer to any is yes then...

APPLY TO BECOME A CAREERS ADVISER.

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WOs, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 3 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Offices which are listed on the map.

Positions are nationwide, employed on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172

Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk





● Normandy veteran Tony Bilverstone studies information about his medal

Normandy veteran is honoured

A FORMER sailor who almost died in the D Day landings has received the Legion d'Honneur in recognition of his contribution to the liberation of France.

Tony Bilverstone, the son of a farmer, was born in 1926 in Norfolk, and was a schoolboy when war broke out.

By 1943 he had left school but could not go to fight the war as he was employed as a farm labourer – at that time a 'Reserved Occupation', exempt from conscription.

So he left the farm and after six months working for the Forestry Commission, joined the RNVR as a Signaller.

In June 1944 he joined a tug called Award, which towed a section of Mulberry Harbour (the vast artificial port installations designed to support the landing forces) to Normandy on D Day.

Ten miles off Arromanches the tug was attacked by a German E-boat and sunk.

Tony, who has never learned to swim, was thrown into the sea, and but for the action of a shipmate, who supported him in the water until rescued, he would certainly have drowned.

Sadly, his shipmate did not survive.

Tony continued to serve in the RNVR until he was demobilised in 1946, and he went on to serve in the RNR in London until the 1960s, attaining the rank of Postal PO – in civilian life he worked for Royal Mail until the late 1970s.

In 1979 he and his wife Doris – a former Leading Wren Writer (Pay) whom he had met during the war – bought a small shop in Somerset, retiring several years later to Burnham-on-Sea.

Frailty caused them to go into care in 2011, and not long after Doris died, Tony had a major stroke and moved to a nursing home in Stratford-upon-Avon to be near his daughter.

Now aged 91 and confined to bed, Tony has been honoured for his part in the Liberation of France by being made a Chevalier (Knight) of the Order of the Legion d'Honneur.

Too frail and poorly for a formal ceremony, Tony received the medal at his nursing home, thanks to the efforts of staff and family members, who said they believe he was pleased at the accolade, and that they are all exceptionally proud of him.

Shipmates salute Immortal Memory

WOKING branch held their Trafalgar Day dinner at Hoe Bridge Golf Club, where almost 50 shipmates and guests enjoyed a three-course meal.

Cllr Graham Cundy, Mayor of Woking, was guest of honour, and praised the branch for playing its part in the community over the past 30 years, as well as its charity work.

The toast to Nelson was delivered by branch chairman S/M Rod Fraser, who regaled off some amusing facts about life in Nelson's Navy.

The evening ended with Cllr Cundy proposing a toast to the Queen.

The White Ensign flew proudly over Exeter Cathedral as the Exeter Flotilla commemorated Nelson's victory.

Commencing with '7 bells' rung on the bell of the former destroyer HMS Exeter, the service featured lessons read by Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) Rear Admiral John Clink and Brig Graeme Fraser.

Prayers were read by Lt Chris Seaton and 2/O Dita Dixon of the Exeter Flotilla, OC Freya Hatter of BRNC, PO Tim Nichols of HMS Vivid and Wtr James Haddon of HMS Raleigh.

The Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, the Very Rev David Ison, gave the address, and music was provided by the Band of HM



● S/M Mike Whetlor is press-ganged by Jim Riley and Bob Errington during the HMS Lowestoft Association Pickle Night, part of their reunion at the Sketchley Grange Hotel, Hinckley, Leicestershire

Royal Marines, Lympstone.

Founded in 1946, the Exeter Flotilla is an association of retired officers of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines and their Reserves.

Market Harborough branch celebrated the glorious victory at Trafalgar when 60 members and guests sat down to a formal dinner at Market Harborough Golf Club.

Guest of honour was Lt Cdr Sarah-Louise Peachey who proposed the toast to the Immortal Memory.

Lt Cdr Peachey is a Naval barrister currently based in Scotland.

The loyal toast was made by

S/M Patricia Middleton.

RNA shipmates from 12 Area and the RBL turned out to parade to the war memorial in Dervock, Co Antrim, for a short service to mark the battle, followed by a reception in the Allen & Adair Hall.

The following day, Belfast branch members attended a service at Mary Magdalene Church in the city to commemorate the battle.

Leeds branch commemorated the battle by holding a dinner at Horsforth Golf Club for 110 members and guests.

A number of serving personnel joined shipmates, and there was a contingent of 20 Reservists from

HMS Ceres.

The Falcon Hotel was the venue for some 50 shipmates and guests from Bude branch celebrating the Battle of Trafalgar.

Chairman S/M Dave Worth, welcomed all present, and presentations were made – including that for Shipmate of the Year to S/M Chunky Philp.

Members of the RNA joined personnel from RN Air Station Culdrose at the annual parade through the streets of Madron in West Cornwall to remember Nelson at a thanksgiving service.

On her way home from Trafalgar, sloop HMS Pickle passed the news of the victory and the death of Nelson to Cornish fishermen in Mounts Bay.

They promptly returned to port and spread the news. Shortly afterwards, civic officials arranged a memorial service where the 'Nelson Banner' was paraded for the first time.

The banner is now kept in Madron Parish Church and paraded each year at a memorial service to his 'Immortal Memory.'

Qatar branch held its Trafalgar Night dinner at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Doha, when more than 80 guests – including British Ambassador Ajay Sharma – sat down to a traditional dinner and a full programme which included the ceremony of Sunset, a narration of the Battle of Trafalgar, the singing of old sea shanties, and toasts.



● Standards from Chard and Redruth at the Chard Trafalgar Day service

Double anniversary for Chard

BRANCHES from across the South West Flotilla (No 4 Area) mustered at the Shrubbery Hotel in Ilminster on Trafalgar Day to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Chard branch and to commemorate the death of Nelson.

Branch president S/M Roy Lovell and chairman S/M Malcolm Day welcomed more than 80 members and guests, while Area chaplain S/M Geoffrey Walsh offered Nelson's Grace.

Area president S/M David White, who was accompanied by his wife Monica, gave a very informative after-dinner speech.

The Loyal Toast was offered by Cdre David Pond, patron of Chard branch.

There followed presentations, including flowers and gifts.

Portland branch chairman S/M Dan Sherren asked Area Life Vice President Charles Thompson to present a 30th anniversary gift of an engraved glass rose bowl from his branch to the president of Chard.

The following day Chard branch members and shipmates from the previous evening attended the Trafalgar church service at St Thomas' Church, Cricket St Thomas, during which two standards were paraded from Chard and Redruth.

Following the service those attending relocated to the nearby Cricket St Thomas Golf Club for refreshments prior to departing to their various destinations.

More visitors to Portland ceremonies

THE annual increase in attendance at Portland Cenotaph was evident again this year with more than 500 people braving the cold but dry weather to pay homage to those who had paid the ultimate price in world wars and other conflicts so that we may live in security and peace.

This gathering followed that of the day before when more than 50 people joined Portland branch to observe Armistice Day – another increase in numbers on this special occasion.

The main parade and standards mustered at the Drill Hall before marching or walking up Easton Lane to the beat of the Portland Sea Cadet Corps of Drums, accompanied by the standard of the Isle and Royal Manor of Portland.

The service was led by Rev Tim Gomm, team rector of Portland and president of the Royal British Legion (RBL) on Portland, assisted by Rev James Menzies, team vicar of Portland, and David Framer, lay pastor of

the Portland Methodist Circuit.

Parade commander S/M Charles Thompson of the RNA ensured the event went to time and in good order.

More than 25 wreaths were laid, including one from the Town Mayor of Portland Cllr Charlie Flack.

Others represented included Richard Drax, MP for Dorset South, the Court Leet, the RBL, various Army Associations, the RAF Association, SSAFA, Dorset Police, the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, National Coastwatch Portland Bill, Portland Sea Cadets, Portland ACF, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue and Portland Prison.

A vote of thanks went to Portland Town Council for ensuring the cenotaph was looking so splendid following the refurbishment this year.

Thanks also for continued support went to Weymouth Concert Brass, and to Portland Conservative Club for laying on very welcome hot soup, roast potatoes and dippers, to

accompany 'Up Spirits' after such a cold morning.

The 2017 remembrance did not end at the Cenotaph – at 12.30pm a further service was held in Victoria Gardens at the American Memorial.

The local RBL hosted another Service of Remembrance, this time in the evening, at St John the Baptist Church, Fortuneswell.



Chatham remembers

CHATHAM branch took part in the annual Remembrance Parade at the Great Lines Chatham Naval Memorial.

The Service was sponsored by the Medway Tender OIC Lt Cdr Tracy Peyman on behalf of Cdre Elford, Naval Regional Commander East of England, who took the General Salute.

Chatham shipmates, Royal Naval Reserves and Sea Cadets, who recently organised a Centennial Parade with the Universities of Medway to commemorate the Drill Shed Bombing, endorsed the message: "It is fitting to remember them and countless others, at services such as this at the Naval Memorial, on Remembrance

Sunday each year."

The bombing, which took place at HMS Pembroke on September 3 1917, killed 131 Royal Navy sailors.

A display of poppies was featured (pictured above), the flowers having been individually made by contributors including St Mary's Island ARA (Chatham).

Chatham branch thanked the Universities of Medway, Medway Division RNR, HMS President and all contributors to the parade and the remembrance service.

The branch added: "We pay homage to all those who lost their lives and those who were injured in all theatres of war, protecting our country, letting the world know that Chatham never forgets.



Musicians past and future unite

MILITARY musicians of the past joined with rising stars of the future to pay tribute to a former head of the Royal Navy at a concert in Fareham.

To celebrate their tenth anniversary as one of the country's foremost wind bands, the Royal Marines Association (RMA) Concert Band played at a packed Fareham Hall in Fareham in a joint performance with students from the Royal Marines School of Music, based at HMS Nelson, Portsmouth.

The opening Fanfare to the First Sea Lord was written by Capt David Cole RM in tribute to the RMA Concert Band's president and former First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Jock Slater.

Sir Jock took to the stage to open the programme, telling the audience how proud he was to be the band's president as they celebrated their anniversary.

He also wished the younger trainee musicians the very best in their new Service careers.

The concert, conducted by both the Director of Music at the RM School of Music, Maj Pete Curtis, and the RMA Concert Band's new Director of Music Lt Col Chris Davies, included marches, big band music and the odd novelty item.

The audience included 65 guests, including the Mayor of Fareham, Cllr Geoff Fazackarly, former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Nigel Essenhigh, the current Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Ben Key, Vice Admiral Sir Donald Gosling, the recently-appointed new Principal Director of Music Royal Marines Lt Col Jon Ridley, and the Chief Executive of the Royal Marines Association Brig Mike Ellis.

Some 95 per cent of the RMA Concert Band is made up of former Royal Marines musicians.

Keepsakes from the old Beagle

SURVEY ship HMS Beagle decommissioned from the Royal Navy in February 2002 and within weeks had been sold for conversion to a luxury superyacht.

The late Peter Bull, was involved in transforming the Bulldog-class vessel – he and a large talented workforce at Poole took three years to turn her into the Motor Yacht Titan.

Peter was very proud of his achievement, but sadly is no longer with us.

His widow, Pauline, said: "I am no longer involved with the project, but I have the happy memories of doing the interior design

for the ship; however, I am loathe to part with my memorabilia from the project, but I would love to give all these items to someone who was involved with HMS Beagle."

Pauline said she doesn't even know the name of the "kind, talented gentleman" who made a magnificent wooden platter out of a piece of original decking from HMS Beagle.

This platter had a rum decanter with six engraved glasses.

Pauline also has items such as the original Navy deck plan, HMS Beagle plaque and decommissioning ceremony booklet. Pauline

is happy to pass them on to someone who cares and was involved with HMS Beagle.

Pauline can be contacted at limitlessok@aol.com

Beagle, launched in 1967, was built by yacht builder Brooke Marine and displaced just over 1,000 tons.

She had a ship's company of around 45, and although designated a coastal survey ship she saw service from the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean.

She is now a luxury charter vessel cruising the Mediterranean.



Joining the online community

WHILE Project Semaphore is designed to help digitally-isolated veterans, the scheme has proved a very inclusive initiative.

Eligible veterans have been referred to the Project Semaphore team in their hundreds, receiving iPads in order to share in the benefits of online services, and banish loneliness.

And the support they receive, both to get started and as they become more adventurous, has come from fellow shipmates, family and friends, and younger members of the Naval family.

Sea Cadets have responded to calls to mentor veterans, and with patience and expert knowledge, the potential sailors of the future have been only too pleased to help those of the past.

A number of charities have enabled Semaphore to reach eligible candidates, including the RNBT, SSAFA, Scottish War Blinded, the RMA, RBLI, WRNS BT, the Wrens Association, the Merchant Navy Association and members of CONA.

Care homes, including Pembroke House and the Royal Star and Garter, have really embraced the opportunity to enhance their activities programme to include exploring a number of iPad features and photography.

Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Ian Wheatley is also a huge supporter of the project – with a really busy schedule, he takes time to encourage eligible veterans to give Facetime a try.

Glynne is one veteran to embrace Project Semaphore.

He served in cruiser HMS Newfoundland and his son often prints information about the ship from the internet to share with his Dad.

Glynne is so excited that he can use his iPad to find more details and pictures of the ship and maybe reconnect with some old Shipmates. Glynne is 92.

Wish comes true as Ernie visits warships

SHARING a joke and a dit in a Portsmouth Historic Dockyard eatery are close friends Rev Keith Robus and Ernie Searling.

When Ernie's care home offered to make residents' wishes come true, the 99-year-old asked to see his beloved Navy again.

On hand as his guide for the day by the Solent was Rev Keith, today the chaplain at Britannia Royal Naval College, but many moons ago a young cleric in Harrow, West London, where Ernie and his late wife Mary used to live.

Mary felt sorry for the young-looking curate and invited him round to tea, which was a start of their long-lasting friendship, – which included looking after Keith's dog.

Fast forward a few decades and Ernie now lives in a care home, which offered to make the wishes of its residents come true to mark its 25th anniversary.

Ernie's wanted to set foot on a

warship again and meet up with his old friend Keith.

During their day in the historic dockyard, Ernie and Keith had a look at HMS Victory and HMS Warrior before taking to the water for a tour of the harbour and a closer look at today's destroyers and frigates – including HMS Iron Duke – and the new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

"It's a real joy to come here and be with young people and the Navy again," Ernie said.

"I looked in the water; the thing that hit me in the eyes was the cleanliness of the water – the harbour control here must be jolly good."

"I thought the new carrier was a terrific ship, but I really thought it was too big."

Ernie signed up for the Royal Marines the day war with Germany was declared in 1939.

As part of his visit he was presented with a new beret representing the current monarch to go alongside his original blue beret, which marked his service under King George VI.

"They are both good monarchs to serve under and a darn good country to fight for," said Ernie.



Ernie and Keith have remained in touch down the years exchanging letters and Christmas cards.

In December last year, Keith paid Ernie a surprise visit and found out that he was fast approaching 100.

Keith said: "It was a

tremendous joy to be able to show Ernie about the dockyard and to show off some of the new ships in the Royal Navy."

"He is a very loving man, an exemplary Christian, and it was marvellous of Quantum Care to make the whole evolution possible."

Alec celebrates 100 years

THE City of Glasgow branch were asked to visit a former sailor who has reached the grand old age of 100 years.

Alec Collins served in the Royal Navy from 1940-45, signing on at Skegness and served in HMS Iona, Arbona, Robina and Drummer Boy.

After demob he went back to his trade of tailor until he retired.

S/Ms Kenneth McKinnon (Chairman) and David Carlin (Treasurer – pictured right with Alec) called at Alec's home and S/M David presented him with a certificate from the branch on achieving his century.

He was also presented with a bag of RNA goodies with an invitation to meet the members of the branch on their next meeting.



Chairman dies

CHRISTCHURCH and District branch is mourning the death of former chairman Dennis Morris, who died at the age of 92.

Dennis joined the Senior Service in 1943 at the age of 18, seeing action in the Battle of the Atlantic and at Normandy in 1944, for which he was recently awarded the Legion d'Honneur.

After demob in 1946 he joined the Royal Fleet Reserve and was an instructor at Henley-on-Thames Sea Cadets.

In recognition of his service to the RNA he was made Life President of Christchurch branch.

↓ RNA Central Office,
Room 209, Semaphore
Tower (PP70), HM Naval
Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.
↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com
↓ 023 9272 3747
↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our October edition (right) was RFA Engadine, which replaced converted LST HMS Lofoten.

The correct answers were provided by A K Manning, of Oxford, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship (above) was launched in April 1962 and named after a tribe of Native Americans that were based in what is now north-east United States and south-east Canada.

The ship saw service in the Med, the Gulf, the Caribbean and the Far East before she was decommissioned in 1980.

1) What was the frigate's name, and 2) at which shipyard was she built?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building,



HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be received by January 17 2018.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our February 2018 edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 274

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

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www.royalmaritimeclub.co.uk

We wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a very happy & peaceful New Year

New VCC unit opening in Arbroath

ARBROATH Division will be the newest addition to the Royal Marines Cadets of the Volunteer Cadet Corps when it opens this month, and will be the first such unit to open in Scotland.

This is just one location to benefit from the VCC expansion programme scheduled to take place between 2016 and 2020.

Co-located with 45 Cdo Royal Marines at RM Condor, the unit will offer local boys and girls all the training and activities that their peers are enjoying at existing units along the South Coast of England.

Cadets can learn new skills, including navigation and first aid, get stuck into competitions with other cadet units, participate in ceremonial parades and make loads of new friends – all whilst have lots of fun.

If you are aged 16 or under and would like to join as a cadet, or perhaps you are an adult who would like to help this new unit get up and running, get in contact for more information – write to Arbroath Division RMVCC, Royal Marines Condor, Arbroath, Angus, DD11 3SJ.

Teenager was top of the list

CONGRATULATIONS to AC Robson, who passed his selection interview for the Royal Navy with flying colours – all while still at school.

The teenager, from Wallsend unit, applied to join the Navy aged exactly 15 years and nine months, and is hoping to go into the Warfare Branch.

He was the youngest in his group when he sat the psychometric tests – and still managed to score the highest marks.

Lisa Gelder, committee trustee, said: "Not only should he be proud of himself, but his Sea Cadets family is so proud of what he has achieved."

"He is an asset to the unit and a fantastic role model for others."

Trophy for Caitlin

CADET Cpl Caitlin is the first cadet to receive the 1956 Temeraire Trophy, awarded to an individual in the Cadet Forces who shows certain qualities during the week-long Royal Marines Cadet Physical Training Instructor course.

Caitlin, from Wigan unit, spent a week at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth, and is now part of the North West Physical Training Team as a Core PTI.

Her mum, Andrea, said: "The support and skills offered by the Sea Cadet Corps and its instructors have assisted Caitlin immensely in working towards her dream of become a PE teacher after completing her GCSEs in 2018."

New Naval leader

HAMPSHIRE Scouts are delighted to announce that Cdr Martin Mackey RN has been appointed as their new adult volunteer leader.

Martin is the 14th County Commissioner that Hampshire Scouts have had in their 110-year history, succeeding Adam Jollans, an IBM Program Director.

Hampshire is the largest Scout County in the UK, with over 25,000 youth members and adult volunteers, having grown every year since 2005.

South Shields School welcomes CCF unit

A NEW Combined Cadet Force (CCF) Naval Section enjoyed a grand opening ceremony complete with a Corps of Drums from the Royal Marines and a visit by the most senior Naval Officer in the North of England.

Cdre Phil Waterhouse, Naval Regional Commander for the North of England, was the guest of honour, officially welcoming South Shields School CCF into the Naval Service.

"It is real pleasure to be here and open this new Royal Navy CCF unit on Tyneside," said Cdre Waterhouse.

"We have a very rich history that connects us with your area through some of our ships and their affiliations to your towns and cities."

"Today you are formally welcomed into the Royal Navy family and we will do all we can to support you and the section from its birth and onto its full maturity."

South Shields School is the third Royal Navy Section established across the country under the Cadet Expansion Programme, an initiative seeking to increase cadet units in state schools, run in partnership with the Ministry of Defence and Department of Education.

It is a chance for pupils to experience a military ethos, promote self-discipline and instil values that will help them get the most out of their lives as well as contribute to their communities.

The main objective is to provide a safe environment in which young people can develop through undertaking challenging but very enjoyable activities, all underpinned by the values and standards of the Armed Forces – and in this case, the finest traditions of the Royal Navy as well.



traditions of the Royal Navy as well.

"This is one of the proudest moments I've had since taking up Headship at South Shields," said Allie Denholm (pictured above).

"The CCF underpinned the values that I wanted and the vision of the governors for the school."

"It has been a great day – the children have a real enthusiasm for the Royal Navy, and we are so fortunate to have Sgt Holmes, who works with them; inspiring them all the time."

Sgt Andy Holmes, the unit's School Staff Instructor, served in the Royal Marines for 14 years and is a local lad who wants to give back to his community.

"The kids are great – I have a lot of time for them and I've really built up a good rapport with them."

"We have plenty of activities to keep them interested – sub-aqua, kayaking on the Tyne, waterborne activities and climbing at a local outdoors centre."

"We also teach them core Naval skills like ropework, military bearing and drill."

"At an open evening the other week the whole school got involved with a nautical theme; it's really grabbed the imagination and enthusiasm of everyone."

Leading the parade was Cadet LH Jordan, 15, who has been with the CCF for only a few months.

"I'm finding it all really enjoyable," said Jordan.

"It's giving me more opportunities and ideas for the future, and we get to do a lot more than we would otherwise."

Alongside Jordan was Cadet LH Allie, also 15, who has relations with connections to the sea.

"The CCF has given me the chance to build up my confidence and learn important life skills in a really great atmosphere with all my friends," said Allie.

"One of my grandfathers was a Merchant Navy tanker captain and the other worked in the shipyards on the Tyne – they think it's really amazing what I'm doing in the CCF Cadets."

Huddersfield celebrate successes

THE hard work and dedication of Huddersfield unit was celebrated at an awards evening at the town's Drill Hall, presenting an opportunity to reflect on achievements and what makes the Sea Cadets special.

The event was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Kirklees and her Consort, Cllr Gwen Lowe and Ken Lowe, as well as unit officials, parents of cadets and family members.

Before the award presentation began, the cadets were inspected by Cllr Lowe, after which refreshments were provided by Mr and Mrs Smith, the parents of one of the cadets receiving awards.

As well as individual awards, the Divisional Trophy was presented to the division accumulating the most credits over the last quarter – the Junior Division.

At the end of the event Cllr Lowe congratulated the cadets and said what an honour it was to be able to meet such fine young people.

She also acknowledged the commitment and hard work of the Cadet Instructors and staff.

CPO (SCC) Kiran Kundi, the unit's Commanding Officer, said, "The annual presentation evening is a time to reward the cadets for their hard work and many achievements throughout the year."

"The whole ship's company should be proud of everything they have done this year."

Poppy support

SEA Cadet units up and down the country have been helping this year's Poppy Appeal.

Newcastle East unit's Cadet Cait attended the city's official campaign launch, when a giant sculpture of a soldier wrapped in poppies was unveiled.

Meanwhile, City of Liverpool unit was invited to help launch the appeal at Liverpool Town Hall, along with the Lord Mayor of the city.

Cadets from the unit also interviewed veterans for a permanent display for Liverpool's museums.

WRNS welcomed

STOKE-on-Trent unit welcomed former Wrens from across the country to its HQ in what was a particularly special occasion for one young cadet.

Anastazia, 12, received her promotion to Leading Junior Cadet, along with her Green Module badge and her Commodore's Long Pennant badge from a very special visitor, Anthea Larken.

Mrs Larken was a former Director of the WRNS, who was appointed as an ADC – an adviser – to the Queen in 1988.

Commanding Officer Sub Lt (SCC) David Eivers RNR said: "It is safe to say Anastazia was taken aback by this very special presentation, and I for one know she will never forget it."

No place for hate

TORFAEN unit joined Gwent Police and other community groups and agencies at the #WeStandTogether event in Newport during Hate Crime Awareness Week.

Cadets enjoyed the cultural café and live acts, and the unit's band also performed.

The aim of the event was to show that hatred and intolerance have no place in communities.

Birthday celebrations

RUISLIP unit celebrated its 75th anniversary on with an open evening at the unit's HQ in Cordingley Road, Ruislip, where former cadets, staff and committee members were invited back along with supporters and parents.

The evening took the form of displays of historical material, photos and memorabilia around the unit's main deck while the cadets (Junior Cadets, Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets) put on activities within their classrooms.

At the end of the evening, the unit went to Evening Colours, during which Mrs Margaret Mellow, aged 93, unveiled a plaque commemorating a room in memory of her late husband.

CPO Bill ('Perky') Mellow was the former chairman of HMS Ganges West London Division and a staunch supporter of Ruislip unit.

Margaret was supported by her daughters and sons-in-law together with members of HMS Ganges Association and Uxbridge RNA.

The Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Carol Melvin, spoke about the contribution of the Sea Cadets within the local community over the past 75 years.

Cdr Paul Hammond, a former

member of Ruislip unit, spoke about how his experiences as a Sea Cadet had developed his interest in the Royal Navy and had helped him with his career.

Fellow Royal Navy officer Cdr James Nisbet, the Sea Cadet Corps' London Area Officer, spoke about the importance of heritage.

All three speakers also presented badges and awards.

Cdr Nisbet presented Lt (SCC) Barrie Yorke RNR – a member of Sea Cadet staff for 33 years and at Ruislip unit since 1991 (of which 16 were as commanding officer, from 1991 to 2007) – with a Certificate of Good Service and Appreciation.

More than 100 people attended the event.

The unit was formed during World War 2, in 1942, and first met in the Manor Senior School based in Eastcote Road, Ruislip.

The school later became Bishop Ramsey Lower School before being demolished some ten years ago.

The Headmaster of Manor Senior School, Mr W G Davies, was the first chairman of the unit's management committee.

In the late 1940s the Sea Cadets moved to a more permanent HQ in No 4 Maintenance Unit, RAF West Ruislip, and adopted the



● The Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Carol Melvin, having just presented Junior Cadets Emi and Taedyn with their berets

name TS Astra.

When the base closed and the site was leased by the US Air Force the Sea Cadets had to move again – several times – before finally taking over a former RAF Records post office hut which has been their home since 1961.

In 1962 the unit was renamed TS Pelican, the original name of Sir Francis Drake's ship when he circumnavigated the globe.

Chairman Aidan Harris said: "It was a brilliant evening and it was great to see so many ex cadets, ex staff and ex committee members come back to see us."

"We even had a cadet return who was in the unit during World

War 2, John Davies, now 90 years old and looking very sprightly, who shared his memories of the Sea Cadet band of his day – well over 40 cadets strong and playing at all the major occasions."

Fishguard unit also celebrated their 75th anniversary, marking the milestone with a service and a naming ceremony for its new dinghies.

Sub Lt (SCC) Chris Peake RNR, Officer in Charge at Fishguard, said: "The whole day was a huge success and we would like to thank all the volunteers, cadets, committee, and parents' and supporters' association for all their hard work."

New SCC website launched

THE Sea Cadet Corps has launched its new website to align content more closely with the teenager of today.

The organisation said that "over the past few years, the problems teenagers face have grown and changed."

"It's something, as a charity working with young people, we are well aware of."

"On our new website, you can read first-hand accounts from cadets and parents about the positive impact Sea Cadets is making, as well as how you can support the charity."

Speaking directly to cadets, their families and volunteers, SCC HQ said the new site, at www.sea-cadets.org/, "is designed with you in mind, packed full of inspiring stories and useful information to help you do something really powerful and support the incredible work we do."

"Whether that's by joining as a cadet to kick-start your confidence, as a volunteer to inspire young people to new heights, or as a parent and potential supporter who can help fund this vital work."

"We hope it helps you see what a great charity Sea Cadets is for young people today."

Cadets confer

TEENAGERS from across the country came together at SCTC Weymouth for the annual Cadet Conference.

The event, in early November, allowed 48 cadets to take part in a series of workshops and other activities.

The conference was introduced because cadets said they wanted to have a stronger voice when it came to the charity.

Their contributions will be fed back at area conferences attended by volunteers, meaning the young people can shape the future of Sea Cadets.

A series of workshops were led by the charity's six First Sea Lord Cadets.

They asked their fellow cadets questions on certain topics and encouraged debate, before feeding back to cadets, volunteers and employees later that day.

Later, working in teams in a *Dragons' Den*-style session, cadets pitched new ideas for the charity to a panel from Sea Cadets' London headquarters.

This included ways to interact in the digital age – for example, the ways in which they would like to communicate with the charity, and what they would like to hear more or less about.

They were asked to what extent Sea Cadets should embrace the digital age, and whether cadets should be allowed digital devices, such as mobile phones, at their respective units.

Cadets also dressed up for dinner and enjoyed a quiz and other games.

1,000 dinghies

IT HAS been two years since the RS Quest sailing dinghy was launched, and 1,000 of them have now hit the water, opening up new life experiences to even more young people.

It's a great time to be involved with Sea Cadets, as the Corps have also just launched the RS Zest dinghy, as reported in last month's edition.

Even better, the Sea Cadets HQ is match-funding 100 of these new dinghies.

To find out more, see www.rssailing.com/sea-cadets/



City show-stoppers

HUNDREDS of young people came together to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar at the Sea Cadets' national Trafalgar Day parade.

Around 400 Sea Cadets from across the country marched on Horse Guards Parade to Trafalgar Square, where there was a performance by the Massed Bands of the Sea Cadet Corps (pictured above).

There were also flag displays and a physical training performance from cadets, wreath-laying, a parade inspection and a service.

The Corps marks the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar with a parade on Trafalgar Square on the Sunday closest to October 21 every year, in a tradition going back more than a century.

On that date in 1805, Admiral Lord Nelson defeated the combined French and Spanish fleet off Cape Trafalgar in southwest Spain, losing his life at the height of his most famous victory.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell said: "This show-stopping parade is a reflection of the hard work, dedication and passion our cadets and volunteers have invested throughout the year, and we are really proud of them."

"The day went really well, and you can tell from the smiles on people's faces that everyone



enjoyed themselves."

The Clydebank unit held their first Trafalgar Dinner this year – an event which included an HMS Victory cake (pictured right).

Unit president of TS Queen Elizabeth George Troup and commander Rena O'Neil invited members of the City of Glasgow branch of the Royal Naval Association to join them on the occasion.

As well as the cake there was a "scrumptious" menu, and RNA branch secretary S/M Brian MacKenzie read the Immortal Memory of Nelson, while RNA branch chairman S/M Kenneth McKinnon gave the Loyal Toast.

RNA members passed on their congratulations to the cadet unit for what they described was "an excellent night."

Hollie sets the benchmark

EIGHT-year-old Hollie is pictured hard at work – dedication that has led to her being recognised by a veterans' association.

Hollie has cheerfully helped her grandfather, Dave 'Crash' Evans, maintain the HMS Victorious bench at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire by scrubbing, sanding and painting the bench to preserve it from the elements – a duty she has been carrying out for a number of years.

The Victorious Association awarded her the Powder Monkey Award, for primary-school-aged children who help at Victorious Association events, or for activities above and beyond the call of duty.

For the past three years she has also helped with the same task at the HMS Ganges memorial and bench at the NMA.

Hollie really gets stuck in – polishing nameplates, scrubbing



bird mess off, then sanding and finally painting – and her work is said to be worthy of the best ship's side party.

Her only want for a day's scrubbing and painting is a soft drink and a slice of cake

So when Charles 'Florrie'

Ford, who produces certificates for the Ganges Association, heard about her and another youngster he created the Junior Elephant award to show the association's gratitude to youngsters who show the 'Ganges Spirit' for the betterment of society.



Shopping winners

CHIPPENHAM unit are the winners of the easyfundraising.org.uk #UnitsUnite competition, worth £100 of Argos vouchers.

Chippenham are one of over 200 units fundraising through volunteers, parents and the wider community shopping online via easyfundraising.

After hearing of their win, Rebecca from the unit said: "We're so thrilled to be rewarded for our fundraising efforts."

"This has come at just the right time for us as we have been struggling with a very old laptop – now we can put this voucher towards a much-needed replacement."

For further details see <http://sea-cadets.easyfundraising.org.uk/>



Jordan's skills are tested

A SEA Cadet from Stockport unit put his first-aid skills to good use at the scene of a car crash.

Leading Cadet Jordan (above) was walking home from work in late October when the collision happened – and having learnt first aid at Stockport unit, the 17-year-old was able to spring into action.

After establishing the driver of one of the vehicles had no spinal or back injuries, he helped her out of the car and treated her for shock and a head injury.

A 95-year-old woman in one of the other cars was also helped out of her vehicle and treated for shock.

Jordan also spoke to the ambulance service on the phone, answering their questions.

He was able to keep the two women calm until paramedics arrived, at which point he was described by one as "today's hero".

Apprentice fitness instructor Jordan is now keen to spread the importance of first aid, and is encouraging other people to learn what could be vital lifesaving skills.

"I was the only one there who knew what to do – no one else knew how to act," he said.

"It was thanks to Sea Cadets that I was able to help."

"I have qualifications from my time there, and I was able to keep calm and act when it mattered."

"Everyone I have told has commented on what I did, and my mum was so proud when I told her."

"But I just did what anyone would, really, although I didn't realise until a few hours afterwards the scale of it."

PO (SCC) Phillip Guest, Officer in Charge at Stockport unit, said: "Jordan is one of our senior cadets."

"We are very proud of him at the unit, and are not surprised to hear of his actions at the scene of an accident."

"We, as a charity, give our cadets the skills and confidence, but it is the cadets as individuals who put these skills into action."

"Leading Cadet Jordan is everything Sea Cadets promotes, and he demonstrates the values at all times."

"As his Commanding Officer, I am proud to hear of his involvement in supporting people and giving assistance."

Sheppey style

IF a job is worth doing, it's worth doing well – and that's certainly something Sheppey unit took to heart when it redecorated its premises.

Local man Richard Jefferies, whose children were cadets at the unit, painted the mural free of charge, basing it on Turner's painting *The Fighting Temeraire*.

Sheppey unit has to redecorate every two years, and we are sure the unit will come up with something equally as imaginative in 2019...

VC hero honoured

THE head of the Maritime Reserve, Cdre Martin Quinn, and Commandant General Royal Marines Major Gen Robert Magowan joined the great-granddaughters of a Corps hero as a new-look RMR detachment was opened in Manchester.

The Prettyjohns Building will be used each week by at least 39 green berets who live in and around Greater Manchester, as well as seven men who hope to prove themselves good enough.

There's been an RM presence in Manchester for 60 years, sharing a base with the city's Army reservists.

More than £1m has been spent converting a former garage complex at the Haldane Barracks site on Eccles New Road into a fitting 21st-Century home for the Mancunian marines – part of the larger RMR Merseyside based 30 miles down the M62.

In creating the new facility, a stone's throw from the Salford Quays/Media City complex, the Corps decided to name it after a local hero – Crimean War veteran Cpl John Prettyjohns, the first Royal Marine to earn the Victoria Cross.

The Devonian used a wrestling throw – a 'West Country buttock' – to thwart the leader of a Russian assault on British lines at the Battle of Inkerman in November 1854, while his men hurled stones at their attackers to fend them off.

Prettyjohns retired to what is now south Manchester, where he worked as a golf club steward.

One hundred and thirty years after his death, his descendants Maria Gibbs and Laura Walsh were invited to the dedication of the building named after the VC winner.

The two-storey £1.1m complex is a mix of modern office and training facilities indoors, with regain and climbing ropes, training wall and troop-training shelter outside.

Deaths

Capt A M 'Mike' Downes. Trained at the Thames Nautical Training College HMS Worcester, and as a cadet he manned Cutty Sark on her last voyage from Falmouth to Greenhith in 1938. Joined as a midshipman in the RNR from the Merchant Navy. Aged 18 he joined Q-ship HMS Botley (SS Lambridge). 1942-45 served as navigator and anti-submarine officer in HMS Tay, participating in convoy battles. Served in HMS Patroler as a troopship (Far East), discharged 1946. Postwar he joined ships sailing mainly between the UK and Australia, and Melbourne to Cairns, returning to UK for Naval training before joining the Royal Australian Navy. As a Lt Cdr he was Master Attendant of Garden Island Naval Base; deputy Capt of the Port and Senior Pilot, Sydney; also commanded Australian boom defence vessel Kookaburra, tugs Sprightly and Emu and motor vessel Woomera; retired 1960. Sept 24. Aged 96.

Capt Anthony M G Pearson. Served HMS Broadford, Dryad, Andromeda, Puma, Heron, Wolverton, 890 & 899 NAS also NAVSEC, DFR(N) and Naval Attaché Athens. Oct 22. Aged 86.

Cdr Geoffrey Sharp. HMS Warrior, Drake, Tiger, Cambridge, Newfoundland and JWE. Sept 27. Aged 90.

Cdr Michael E St Q Wall. Dir Naval Recruiting, Director Naval Signals, HMS Mercury, Victorious, President, Sea Eagle and HMV Britannia. Oct 5.

Lt Col RM Simon J Hall. 1 Assault Gp RM, RM Poole & Plymouth, HQRM, HQ 3 Cdo, 45 Cdo. DROFM and CTCRM. Aug 29. Aged 57.

Lt Cdr Andrew G Bolam. HMS Nelson, Exeter, Excellent, Ark Royal, Marlborough, Nottingham, Royal Arthur and Intrepid, also MCM3. Oct 21. Aged 56.

Lt Cdr Brian M Cocup. HMS Kenya, Royal Australian Navy, HMS Cockatrice. Sept 30. Aged 91.

Reunions

February 2018
HMS Birmingham Association reunion February 23-24 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. For details email socialsec@hmsbirminghamassociation.co.uk

March 2018
HMS Ganges Association reunion March 9-12 at the Ingwood Hotel, Torquay. Ring Basil Downing-Waite on 01752 771983, 07816 654718 or email bazval@btinternet.com

40 Cdo Association RM reunion March 23-26 at the Britannia Country House Hotel, Didsbury, Manchester. Details from Brian Bartlett on 0151 6398078 or email 40commandoassociation@gmx.co.uk

HMS Ledbury, Brecon & RMS St Helena Falklands 1982 reunion March 30-April 1 at Menzies Strathallan Hotel, Birmingham. Ring Ian McVitie on 07769 149612 or email ianmccvitie@outlook.com

April 2018
Fleet Air Arm Association reunion April 6-9 at the Shire Hotel in Kettering. Email enquiries@iowtours.com

HMS Loch Fada Association F390

Submissions for the Deaths and Reunions columns, and for Swap Drafts, in January's Noticeboard must be received by **December 6**

Lt Cdr A Richard Gleadow. 800 NAS, HMS Fulmar, Daedalus, Goldcrest, Eagle and RNEC. Oct 22.

Lt Cdr Nicholas G T Harris. HMS Heron, Dryad, Mohawk, Osprey, Naiad, Centurion, Excellent, Bulwark, NATO AFSE Italy, FOF3, 846 NAS and FONAC. Oct 14.

Lt Cdr Arthur Michael Downes RNR. RAN Kuttabul and RAN Sprightly. Sept 24. Aged 96.

Lucy M MacDonald (nee Hesmondhalgh) QARNNS. Trained as a nurse in London Barts aged 23. 1939 as a third-year trainee she helped in the evacuation of Barts to Hertfordshire to prepare for mass casualties in London but returned as an SRN to Barts during the Blitz, and was on night duty when London was firebombed. 1942 joined the QARNNS and spent time at a WRNS new-entry establishment at Blundellsands Hotel, near Liverpool, and at Dartmouth. Travelled to the Far East where, as the war ended, she was involved in the recovery of 125,000 Allied Prisoners of War and Internees. Later went to Java where 9,000 women and children were found in Tjondeng Camp. The Korean War broke out June 1950 and Lucy arrived on board the Maine, refitted as a hospital ship. In the first month Maine carried 1,675 wounded to safety; Lucy later made 13 voyages between Korea and Japan. In 1981 she returned to Korea as a guest of the South Korean Navy. July 6. Aged 102.

Lt Cdr Richard S 'Dick' Tough. Served early 1960s to 1990s. RNRW Association. Sept 25. Aged 70.

Sub Lt John T O Phillips RNRV. HMS Pembroke. Oct 18. Aged 94.

David J M Howe MAA. Served 1983-2006, initially in HM Submarines as a Sonar Operator before transferring to the Regulating Branch in 1990. Units included NPM Rosyth, HMS Mercury and Invincible, NP Diego Garcia, NPM Portsmouth, NPM

reunion and AGM April 12-16 at the Radisson Park Inn, Mary Ann Street, Cardiff CF10 2JH. Meet up Thurs and local visit; mystery coach tour Friday; Saturday AGM at 1030 with reunion dinner at 1830; coach outing to museum Sunday. Bookings through IOW Tours (iowtours.com) or tel 01983 405116; or F390.sec11@virginmedia.com, tel 01252 310767 or via F390 Sec, 91 Ayling Lane, Aldershot, Hants GU11 3ND.

RN Engineering Association annual reunion at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, April 13-16. Contact Bob Styant on 0121 422 4115 or rstyants@btinternet.com

HMS Hermes Cooks 1968-70. Annual get-together at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, over the weekend of April 14. Contact Hubert Enright on 07884 040041 or email scouseenright@hotmail.co.uk

RN Colony Class Cruisers reunion April 13-16 at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol. Contact Alan Waite on 01162 833266, email alan04@live.co.uk or enquiries@iowtours.com

HMS Ganges Association reunion at Mill Rhye Holiday Village, Hayling Island, April 13-16. All ex-HMS Ganges Boys, members and guests welcome. Contact Tony Willders 07787 106202 or tony.willders@btinternet.com

HMS Courageous Association reunion April 20-22 at Mickleover Court Hotel, Derby. Email stevecrowley34@gmail.com or tel Steve on 01803 875622 or 07943 812342 for further information.

HMS Decoy Association reunion April 20-23 at Park House Hotel, Blackpool. Tel 01502 677395 or email Malcolm Dobson at dobbo.exm@btinternet.com for details.

849 Naval Air Squadron Gannets reunion to be held April 26-29 at Hotel Mariners, Haverfordwest, Dyfed. Contact John Rawling on 07789 480195 or email jsrawl@aol.com for further details.

Loch Class Frigates Association reunion April 27-30 at the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth. Contact Secretary Andrew Nunn on 0117 9505835 or email Andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk

May 2018
HMS Tenby Association 25th annual reunion at the Collingwood Hotel, Priory Road, Bournemouth, May 18-21. Contact Ken Jones on 01752 406326 or email krhysjones@blueyonder.co.uk

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Clyde, HMS Drake, NP Sarajevo, NPM Plymouth and HMS Illustrous, also FTRS 2010-11 in the RNLA HMS Collingwood. Sept 10. Aged 51.

Gerald 'Tilley' Townrow PO Gunner. Joined HMS Caledonia 1937 and served HMS Iron Duke, Sussex, Rotherham, Constance, Hornet, Nereide, Diligence, Excellent and Nelson. January. Aged 94.

Des Price, PO Sto. Served 1944-46 in HM Submarines Otway, Tribune and Totem. New Zealand branch. Oct 4. Aged 97.

John Shore PO. Served aboard HMS Orion 1946 as a PO and a member of the Association. Aug 22. Aged 92.

Hubert 'Bert' Hazeldon AB. Served 1943-1946. HMS Trollope, Volage, Saunders, HMS Assegai. Member RNA, Ganges and Burma Star Associations, Sea Cadets supporter, recipient of Burma Star and Legion d'Honneur. Died August 11. Aged 91.

Dave 'Clarry' Rogers, Shipwright. (Devonport). Served 1948-87 in HMS Illustrous, Cumberland, Pellew, Hartland Point, Centaur, Mull of Kintyre, Hydra, Osprey plus Christmas Island tests, RNAS Culdrose, RM Poole and Falklands. Oct 19. Aged 85.

Royal Naval Association
Hadley Prestage. Served the SCC for 14 years as PO(SCC) Area Staff Officer (Cook Steward) and was a member of Chatham RNA. Sept 9. Aged 64.

Margaret Sallis RM Wren Writer. Served 1942-45/6 at Stonehouse which entailed visiting ships in harbour. Life Member of Frome branch, having served as treasurer, welfare officer, secretary and president. Oct 7. Aged 92.

John Sherriff, Stoker. Served 1951-57. Joined HMS Raleigh then HMS Birmingham, Darlaston, Wizard and HMS

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Pembroke. Former chairman of Lincoln RNA. Oct 12. Aged 84.

Dennis R 'Ray' Walter RNRV. Joined aged 18, commissioning as a sub lieutenant 18 months later. After Tank Landing Craft training in Scotland he took part in landing equipment and men on Omaha Beach (Normandy Landings); also served in HMS Diadem as Navigating Officer. Post-war transferred to the RFA as Navigating Officer and served in RFA Black Ranger, retiring in 1952. Recently awarded Legion d'Honneur. Former chairman then vice president of Buxton & High Peak RNA. Oct 30. Aged 92.

Dennis C Morris. Served 1943-46. Entered the Royal Fleet Reserve and became member of the Henley-on-Thames Sea Cadets as an instructor, retiring in 1957 as Lieutenant RNRV SP. A long-term member of the Royal British Legion, he also joined the local branch of the RNA in 1998. He was chairman for five years and he was made a Life President of the Christchurch & District branch. Awarded the Legion d'Honneur. Oct 5. Aged 92.

Association of RN Officers/RNOC
Captain Roger C Morgan. MOD, DNOR and Sigs Div, HMS Mercury, Terror, President, Lochinvar, Saker, Aphrodite and Undine. Oct 6. Aged 95.

Surg Capt John H Sewart. Med Dir Gen. RNH Haslar and Plymouth. HM Dockyards Devonport and Singapore, also HMS President. Oct 26. Aged 91.

Cdr John E Taylor. Dir Naval Weapons Service, HMS Rooke, Daedalus, Victory, Warrior, Victorious and Collingwood. Oct 21. Aged 92.

Lt Cdr Anthony T Holmes. HMS Redjack, Pembroke and MOD Engineer in Chief Dept. Oct 1. Aged 97.

Lt Cdr Peter G Lockley. HMS Hermes, Dolphin, Maidstone, Carysfort, Bellerophon, RNC Greenwich and NATO. Oct 11. Aged 86.

Lt Cdr Ian R Pitwood. HMS Saker, Rhyll, Crane, Collingwood, Cleopatra, ASWE and RNEC Manadon. Oct 15. Aged 75.

The best things in life are three

SEVERAL varied naval historical works have been published recently, writes Prof Eric Grove.

One is a reprint of Captain Rory O'Connor's classic guide to ship management which the Admiralty set him to write after a period as Executive Officer of HMS Hood from 1933 to 1936.

As Brian Lavery says in his new introduction, Hood was "the star ship of the fleet" and O'Connor's role was key, under the Captain, as "the chief organiser and motivator of the crew."

Brian perceptively points out that the shadow of Invergordon was an important background factor to the Ten Commandments' regime O'Connor adopted:

- 1) the customs of the Service were to be observed at all times;
- 2) the good appearance of the ship was the concern and responsibility of everyone;
- 3) every man was to bring credit to the ship both afloat and ashore;
- 4) proper courtesy was to be shown to officers 'making a gangway';
- 5) all orders were to be obeyed at 'the Run';
- 6) attendance at the place of duty was always to be punctual;
- 7) permission was always to be asked to leave work;
- 8) finishing work was to be immediately reported by those 'told off' for it;
- 9) card playing but not gambling was to be allowed;
- 10) requests to see the commander were normally to be encouraged if problems arose for the members of the ship's company.

As Brian summarises: "The

commandments were based on consideration for others, good planning and, above all, timekeeping."

O'Connor's success is a matter of some dispute. Capt Pridham, who joined as CO at the end of O'Connor's time, complained that Hood was "the dirtiest ship he had ever seen, infested with cockroaches." This negative picture is denied by those old Hoods I have had the privilege of meeting over the years. Pridham clearly resented his dynamic subordinate, by whom he probably felt a little overshadowed.

There is nothing in the detailed sections of O'Connor's guide that implies any inefficiency, in fact the opposite. As Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cork and Orrery approvingly wrote in the original foreword, Hood had exceptional morale and did well in fleet competitions, the usual contemporary measures of ship quality. Pridham's attitude seems more a reflection of the culture O'Connor was trying to change than an objective critique.

Running a Big Ship; the Classic Guide to Managing a Second World War Battleship – capital ship would have been more accurate, Hood was always a battle-cruiser – (ISBN 978-1-91086-019-9, Casemate £12.99/ ebook £7.99) is a fascinating and informative volume.

Casemate also publish a magazine-style publication **Naval Archives** which originates in Poland with Kagero Publishing.

Each excellently-produced and beautifully-illustrated 'archive' contains a number of pieces. The latest volume, No.6 (ISBN 978-83-65437-52-5) is excellent value at £15.

It features material on the Austro-Hungarian cruiser Sankt Georg, made famous by its mutiny at Cattaro in April 1918; the German light cruiser Königsberg sunk at Bergen in 1940 (the first major warship sunk by aircraft, a major FAA success); an account of the tragedy at Mers El Kebir in 1940; an original analysis of the latter period of the German WW2 U-Boat campaign; and a comprehensive survey of the modern Chinese Navy. As with other volumes, this concludes with 3D colour plates of a ship for which glasses are provided. These work remarkably well and the results are impressive. The vessel chosen is the Japanese WW2 light cruiser Yahagi sunk with the battleship Yamato in 1945.

The third work this month is by far the most substantial. Indeed it is one of the most important books on 20th-Century Naval history yet published. Its author Dr Andrew Boyd, a former RN submarine officer and Foreign Office diplomat, has produced a ground-breaking and original analysis that changes our understanding of British naval policy in the late 1930s and the early years of war.

In **The Royal Navy in Eastern Waters: Linchpin of Victory 1935-1942** (ISBN 979 1 4738

9248 4, *Seaforth* £30) the author argues – persuasively and correctly – that the Royal Navy's record in pre-war build-up, both in terms of materiel and doctrine, was nowhere nearly as bad as it is often painted.

Indeed the British Empire maintained its naval supremacy until well into WW2; the problem was that even this strength was insufficient easily to cope with the emerging triple threat of Japan, Germany and Italy. Both Admiralty and government had to make difficult strategic choices and the evolution of this process is given almost forensic analysis, the best yet available, despite the plethora of literature on the subject.

What emerged was an achievable strategy of defending a 'core' in the Indian Ocean to protect vital communications to and from the Middle East, India and Australasia – and later supplies to Russia. Given covert American assistance in the Atlantic and new construction there was still some potential in 1941 for a viable strategy of defending the Indian Ocean position by a sufficient Eastern Fleet based in Ceylon.

Things went wrong late in the year. Seduced by the prospect of the American build-up in the Philippines the Admiralty decided to base the new Eastern

Fleet at Singapore, a position previously thought of as possibly expendable – at least in strategic if not political terms and whose defence primarily now depended on the RAF and Army.

It was the Admiralty rather than Churchill who insisted on deployment further forward – exactly the opposite of the commonly-accepted view. The aim was to build up a fleet intended to operate northwards against the Japanese, possibly even based at Manila.

Dr Boyd is rightly critical of the lack of attention paid in these plans to the air threat either to the Fleet or Malaya, despite good intelligence of Japanese potential in newly-occupied southern Indochina and experience of the Italians in the Mediterranean. Comparing the Japanese to the latter was not necessarily an assessment of weakness. Contrary to popular opinion, the carrier Indomitable, working up in the West Indies, was not allocated to the new Eastern Fleet. She received no orders to move east prior to her grounding and could never have been in the Far East in early December.

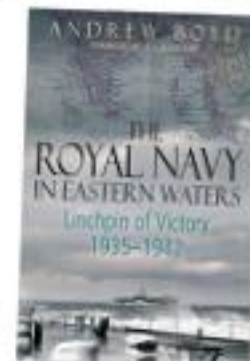
The British and Americans ran out of time. Prince of Wales and Repulse, the vanguard of the new fleet, were sunk by Japanese torpedo bombers when, with weak surface escort and confusion over air cover, they

attempted to disrupt the Japanese landings. It was a disaster of the Admiralty's own making, despite blame later heaped on Churchill.

The author covers the attempt to revert to the Indian Ocean strategy and the key operations around Ceylon in April when the Japanese carriers that had attacked Pearl Harbor entered the Indian Ocean to destroy the Eastern Fleet either at sea or in its bases in Ceylon. Dr Boyd is rather critical of Somerville, the fleet commander, for his almost reckless risk taking although he does argue that, with more luck, a night torpedo attack with Albacores and E-class cruisers might have been successful. I think the author is being a little optimistic but it is an interesting idea worthy of consideration.

Also interesting is the balance between British forces in and planned for the Indian Ocean and American strength in the Pacific later in 1942. It is only in 1943 that the trident begins to be passed between the two navies and then only after a British carrier had been deployed to shore up US Pacific carrier strength. Victorious was indeed way ahead of the Americans in fighter control technique, given superior radar and radios – a persistent British electronic superiority often, as Dr Boyd argues, insufficiently recognised.

This book must be on the shelves of anyone interested in the history of the 20th-Century RN. It is a substantial work in every way.



The Rock: inviolable and impregnable

IN WAR and peace, Gibraltar has proven to be a key stronghold and staging post for Britain.

Only a few weeks ago, it was the hub of activity for military units involved in the hurricane relief mission in the Caribbean.

It was a vital forward base in the Falklands conflict and, above all, the western anchor of Britain's Mediterranean position in two world wars.

As such it's attracted the covetous eyes of foreign powers.

Commanding though Gibraltar's strategic position is, it's also rather vulnerable. Yes, the Rock itself is an imposing geographical feature, but the size of the peninsula did not afford a massive build-up of defenders or defenses.

Nor did it allow the massive build-up of investing forces either – and certainly not without being seen by the defenders.

That was certainly one dilemma faced by German planners who studied seizing the Rock over the winter of 1940-41.

Having failed to defeat Britain either by bombing her into submission, or by conquering the country through invasion (Operation Sealion), Hitler's generals looked for other ways to bring the country down.

One way might be to deprive her of the Rock, a story at the heart of Nicholas Rankin's **Defending the Rock: How Gibraltar Defeated Hitler** (Faber & Faber, £20 ISBN 98-0571-307708).

The title is somewhat misleading, for you realise that it's as much growing German realisation at the scale of the task facing them, Spanish procrastination turning to opposition and Hitler's increasing focus on the planned invasion of Russia which caused the operation to be shelved.

That operation – codenamed Felix – fizzled out in January and February 1941 after a good six months of planning.

And while preparations for Sealion were half-hearted, Felix was evidently taken far more seriously. Elite mountain troops trained in the Juras for the formidable task of assaulting the Rock. The Luftwaffe's premier ground-support bomber formation would have

been committed – some 800 aircraft. Panzers of two armoured divisions, plus motorised infantry would sweep across the narrow border, aided by pioneers and saboteurs to clear the way under a barrage from 165 guns.

There was little surprise or subtlety to Felix. "Every inch of English territory must be pulverised," the Chief of the German General Staff, Franz Halder, wrote in his diary.

The colony would be treated to a month-long softening up by bombing and shelling, followed by a full assault. Gibraltar would fall, planners in Berlin predicted, in four or five days.

And should the Royal Navy try to escape from the naval base, U-boats would be lying in wait in the bay to pick them off.

So much for plans. Berlin needed Spanish support and, still recovering from the devastation of a bitter three-year civil war, Madrid wasn't willing to give it.

Hitler had an excruciating meeting with Franco at Hendaye in October 1940 which left both dictators exasperated. Il Caudillo left the meeting branding the Germans "intolerable".

Berlin spent the rest of the autumn and winter of 1940-41 trying to both browbeat and sweet talk Franco's foreign minister Serrano Suñer into submission. It failed.

Given what happened to Singapore 12 months later, Felix might have succeeded. Natural obstacles aside, the Rock was not the fortress it appeared to be at the time. Only with the arrival of a dynamic new governor, Lord Gort, in the spring of 1941 did Gibraltar become a formidable fortified outpost of Empire.

And so it continued to be a thorn in the Axis side. The colony was a key staging post for Atlantic and Malta convoys, for the build-up to the invasion of North Africa, Operation Torch. It was from Gib that HMS Ark Royal sailed to intercept Bismarck in May 1941. Her Swordfish succeeded in crippling the battleship sufficiently for the Home Fleet to send it to the Atlantic seabed. Pretty much every Serviceman stationed on the Rock welcomed the carrier on her return.

There's something of the pre-war Cold

War West Berlin about Gib, especially in the first half of WW2 – surrounded by enemies, yet with a porous border with Spain; thousands came across each day from La Linea to work on the Rock – the colony needed the manpower, yet any Spaniard could easily be a Fascist spy. Despite the wartime admonition: Careless talk costs lives, the Rock, one intelligence officer fumed "was the most loquacious place I had ever known".

And the porous border worked both ways; British personnel regular slipped across into La Linea to sample the delights of the night... if they could not find them in Gibraltar. Reservist and future author of *The Cruel Sea* Nicholas Montserrat described it as a "boom town", its streets bustling in the evening as the bars and pubs did lively business – as did the street vendors selling "silk, stockings and cosmetics and perfumes."

The arrival of the first Wrens on the Rock was welcomed by the thousands of men stationed there... although they were disappointed that the women worked long hours and were not allowed out without chaperones.

With limited numbers of the opposite sex on the Rock, some men turned to other men for sexual relief.

Though homosexual acts were still illegal, wartime Gib apparently had a reputation for being more tolerant than elsewhere in the Empire; the Trafalgar Cemetery and Alameda Gardens – next to the present-day car park and cable car to the top of the Rock – were popular cruising haunts.

These – and many other anecdotes and asides – make Rankin's book so much more than what the title suggests. This is not a history of fortress Gibraltar in WW2, but a history of wartime Gibraltar – military, social, political, cultural.

At 660 pages it may seem a daunting read, but it moves along at a cracking pace, never gets bogged down with military minutiae, and brings a bygone era vividly to life.

Hitler's military machine isn't the greatest threat Gibraltar has faced under the Union Flag. A century and a half earlier, the Rock came under the most sustained assault in British military history – and stood firm.

There are some surprising similarities between the two periods.

In 1779, like 1940, Britain stood largely alone against a world of enemies; the combined superpowers of Spain and

France, plus the newly-independent USA were arrayed against us.

That very year, Madrid and Paris had signed a treaty agreeing to work together to re-capture territories lost to the British – among them, Gibraltar, seized three quarters of a century before.

That agreement led to a siege lasting more than three and a half years – 11 whole months longer than the most famous modern siege, Leningrad.

It's a story largely unknown to all but historians of either Gibraltar or the period, but now has been expertly recounted by husband and wife team Roy and Lesley Adkins.

Responsible for excellent books on the Napoleonic Wars at sea and the lives of the sailors of the day, they've trawled the archives and libraries of the world once more for first-hand accounts to pepper the excellent **Gibraltar: The Greatest Siege in British History** (Little Brown £20 ISBN 978-1-4087-08675).

The Franco-Spanish forces always enjoyed a numerical superiority but were never able to storm the bastion – initially because the Rock's commanders had prepared for a siege and stocked up on supplies and later, because, the RN succeeded in breaking the enemy's naval blockade.

Preventing Gibraltar's fall demanded a national effort; the effects of the siege were not merely felt by the garrison and civilian population of the Rock who suffered from diseases such as scurvy and endured enemy bombardment.

On the eve of the main Franco-Spanish assault in September 1782, a fleet mustered in the Solent under Admiral Howe. Among the ships gathered, the HMS Hood of her day, HMS Royal George, the largest warship in the world when launched 25 years before.

As she took on stores and maintenance was carried out at Spithead, she heeled over and sank in a matter of minutes. Two out of three of the 1,200 souls aboard died.

So great was the disaster that it became the watchword for tragedy at sea until supplanted by the Titanic in 1912.

Worse, it delayed the departure of the relief convoy to Gibraltar; the Rock was expected to fall. It didn't.

The Franco-Spanish force of more than 60,000 men outnumbered the defenders eight to one and arrayed more than 200 guns, 138 of them on specially-built 'floating batteries' for its grand attack in September 1782.

The batteries proved to be a weakness, not a strength, vulnerable to the red-hot shot – heated cannonballs – fired by Gib's defenders.

All ten batteries were knocked out; three blew up spectacularly, leaving the bay filled with the detritus.

"Dead bodies were floating upon the water, heads, legs, arms, wood, wool, cork, oakum, casks and boxes were washed ashore by the sea and lay in heaps together," one defender recalled.

The destruction also brought a rich booty – salt, candles, wood; anything which could be salvaged was recovered from among the corpses.

Given the hardships Gibraltarians had endured during the blockade – hunger, disease, shortages – as well as the threat of bombardment, such scavenging is understandable (and pales compared with the cannibalism and other horrors during the siege of Leningrad).

After the failed assault and the arrival of Lord Howe's relief force (assisted by the hand of God – a storm caused the blockading Franco-Spanish fleet to scatter), the fate of the Rock was largely secure.

By the time a peace treaty was finally signed in 1783, nearly 1,800 people had been killed, died of disease or wounded (enemy casualties are estimated to be three times higher). It took decades for the small colony to recover. Mid Francis Vernon, who left Gibraltar in the middle of the siege, returned in 1785 and found the town itself still in ruins and littered with shrapnel, while wrecks in the bay were still being salvaged and metal melted down.

But he also found the seeds of a Gibraltar today's matelots would recognise: parade grounds, historic bastions and casemates and especially "an excellent road to the very summit of the rock".

Every matelot who's been to Gib will recognise it from the still-popular Rock Race.



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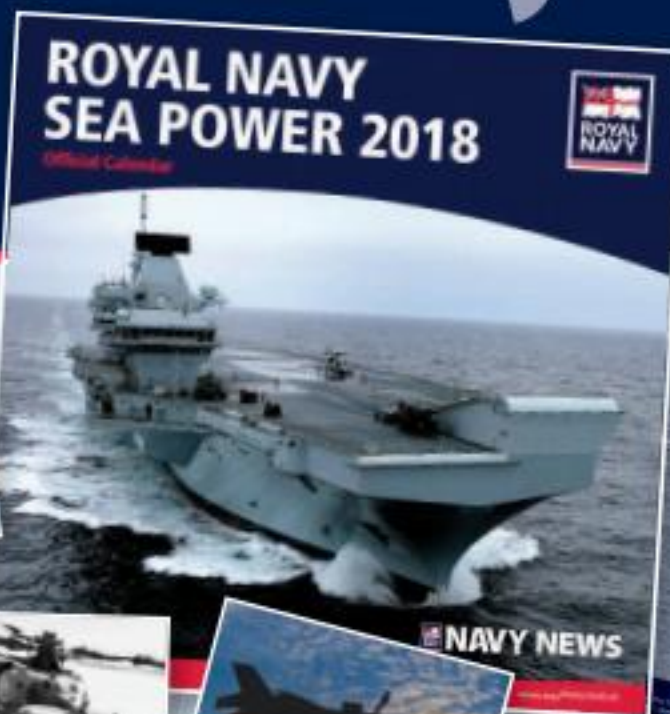
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With its fantastic scenery, plenty of big rivers with frequent grade 2-3 rapids and lots of opportunities for wilderness camping, Canada is the perfect place for future open canoe coaches to develop leadership and personal paddling skills.

As well as paddling over 130km in

two challenging three-day expeditions there was some open-water canoeing which included rafting canoes together to sail across lakes and compulsory white water safety rescue training.

The British Canoe Union-recognised WWSR training is designed to cover essential life-saving techniques required should you or a member of your group capsize or become entrapped.

It involved lots of cold water swimming exercises along with practical demonstrations of rescue and pulley systems used to rescue personnel, their canoes or both.

Attendance on AT activity is listed as a Cat A (mandatory) requirement in 2SL's

Personal Functional Standards. The exposure to challenge and controlled risk enables Service Personnel to develop the fortitude, rigour, robustness, initiative and leadership required for operations and other military tasks.

It also improves teamwork, coordination and communication skills which deliver immediate management benefits 'back in the office'.

More details of the Adventurous Training Scheme can be found in JSP419, online through the Defence Gateway (www) via the ATG(A) or NAVYFIT Apps or alternatively by asking your unit or regional AT/PTI.

Report: WO1 Stu Clayton

Elite compete for rowing honours

ADAPTIVE rowers made their debut at the Royal Navy Indoor Rowing Championships at HMS Temeraire.

PO Sean Gaffney (RNAS Yeovilton) is the reigning World Champion over 1k in Men's Legs Trunk Arms (LTA) for single leg amputee below knee, but here he rowed alongside his peer age group (men's heavyweight 40+) to record 2k/500m times of 6.35 and 1.25.4 respectively.

Women's Adaptive 1k/100m races saw Lt Kirsty Wallace (NCHQ) (Trunk Arms Shoulders-TAS) row 5.06.6 and 28.4 respectively against Nerys Pearce (Arms Shoulders-AS) who achieved 4.40.3 and 21.7 respectively.

The men's heavyweight 50+ 2k category saw a world-class line up with WOPT Tiny Nash (Temeraire) rowing 6.25.4 ahead of CPO Collin Leiba (FOST) in 6.32.2. LPT Al 'Dick' Treacy was the third RN finisher in 6.38.

The men's heavyweight 40+ 2k was won by Lt Col Tom Blythe (PJHQ) in 6.23.6, ahead of Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol) in 6.29.0, ahead of PO Gaffney.

CPOPT Daz Hoare (HMS Bristol) overcame the frustration of a mid-race erg equipment failure when well-placed to row 6.25.8 the following day.



Lt Cdr Craig Guest (HMS Albion) won the men's heavyweight 30+ 2k in 6.26.8, with wife Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (Nelson-QAHC) winning the women's lightweight 30+ 2k in 7.35.9.

The men's heavyweight 2k open saw the fastest time of the day with a superbly-controlled 6.10 by winner Mne Jamie Kershaw.

L/Cpl Dave Moody (40 Cdo) was runner up in 6.22.8 with Sub Lt Robert Guest (NCHQ) third and also nipping under the magic '6.30' with a time of 6.28.8.

Fastest men's lightweight 2k was set by Sub Lt Giles Piggott (HMS Sultan) who rowed 6.38 in the open, ahead of Lt Nick Howe (Raleigh) 6.53.8.

Army Capt Craig Mumby (Thunderer Sqn) saw off the challenge of POPT Rich 'Chazz'

Charrett (Temeraire) in the men's lightweight 30+, times were 6.44. and 6.48.1 respectively.

CPO Tim Cox (HMS Collingwood) had an excellent debut racing season in 2016/17 and looks like he is ready to continue that way over the next 12 months as he won the men's lightweight 40+ in 6.43.4, ahead of CPO Colin Burrows (MCTA) in his debut race.

Cox has overcome injury, surgery, regularly battling at the forefront of his lightweight age group over the past year, consequently he was awarded the annual Doug Wylie Memorial Award for courage and commitment.

Women's 2k races saw Clare Valentine and CPOPT Helen Richardson (both HMS Temeraire) win their respective 2k heavyweight age group races in

8.10.5 and 7.58.9 respectively, with the open heavyweight 2k won by Sub Lt Pauline Theron (HMS Sultan) in 8.01.9.

The women's heavyweight 30+ 2k saw Emily Loftus (Temeraire) with 7.36.7 overcome the fast improving LH Natalie Thorpe (JSU Northwood)'s 7.45.9.

THIRTY-FIVE competitors took part in the Northern Region's inaugural indoor rowing competition at HM Naval Base Clyde.

Both male and female rowers from HMS Neptune, SMQ (North), MCM1, 43 Cdo and HMS Prince of Wales entered the event.

Split into heavyweight and lightweight divisions, there were seven 500-metre rows, followed by races of 2,000 metres.

Perhaps the best race of the day was between 43 Cdo's Sgt Ryan Gorman and Mne Jonathan Batty, with Mne Batty beating the sergeant by just 1.1 seconds.

Overall winner in the female category was AB Charlotte Vowles, from HMS Prince of Wales, who was victorious in both the 500-metre and 2,000-metre races.

In the male heavyweight category it was Mne Batty who won both races, and Mr Walker from Babcock was winner in the 500 metre and 2,000 metre lightweight division.



Heron flying high after narrow win

RUGBY players from HMS Heron beat their counterparts from RAF Odiham 34-31.

The first half saw skipper John Clay kick three out of three – two penalties and converting winger Vince Richardson's try.

With a comfortable lead Heron relaxed a little too much and allowed a re-grouped Odiham to bag a try of their own, making the score 13-5.

Strong running from centre Aaron Hunt broke the line 50m out and found support out wide with a huge pass. The covering defence blocked the path of fullback Josh Oakley who returned a pass back inside to Hunt five metres from the tryline to see him unopposed to the sticks. An easy conversion for Clay made it 20-5.

Just before the halftime whistle a kick from the Odiham full back saw a footrace to the bouncing ball at the Heron 22m line. With both players tracking the ball a controversial penalty try was awarded after the Heron player had allegedly changed his running line to block the Odiham full back. Half time score 20-12.

The second half began with wing Tyus Sargeant going over in the corner, allowing Clay to kick to make it 27-12.

A focus on counter-rucking

saw Odiham stealing Heron's ball at every opportunity and this was the catalyst for what would be a good half of rugby from the visiting team.

Great work from giants 'Lank' and Makepeace and strong defending by veteran Rob Lochhead saw Heron pin Odiham back in their half and the effort put in to the visitors' counter-rucking seemed to have exhausted the Odiham's players.

Multiple infringements crept in and a penalty awarded 20m out saw a quick tap and a pass to put Hunt under the sticks untouched which saw Clay maintain his 100 per cent kicking accuracy.

Heron piled on the pressure in the last five minutes and looked like scoring again but Navy seniors player Scott Makepiece fumbled the ball over the try line in the last play of the game.

■ Heron have a new rugby kit made by Karuta Sportswear which was purchased with a donation from sponsor Debbie Atkins from Atkins and Co.

The kit has incorporated the Royal Marines Dagger and Army Air Corps logos on the sleeves to symbolise that there are rugby players from other departments within RNAS Yeovilton who aren't Fleet Air Arm.

Sides do battle in PT's memory

SPORTSMANSHIP was very much on display when HM Naval Base Clyde and Helensburgh Rugby Club met to compete for the Doug Wylie Memorial Trophy.

It was the second year the sides met for the fixture in memory of much-respected Royal Navy PT Lt Doug Wylie, pictured right, who passed away in 2015.

The game at Helensburgh Rugby Club was hotly-contested and entertaining throughout with the home side dominating the first half.

AB Lee Benzie, who was playing for Helensburgh on this occasion, used his considerable speed to score a brace of tries, and it was clear that the Burgh had the advantage, winning most of the set pieces and giving the visitors little chance of possession.

However, Mne 'Jez' Parsons displayed some sublime skills, scoring a magnificent solo try for the base team.

Going in at the break the score was 32-15 to the Helensburgh side.

The start of the second half saw the Naval Base players gather momentum, coming out the stronger of the two sides.

Within minutes the deficit was reduced as Clyde crossed the line twice in quick succession.

Despite a couple of injuries mid-way through the second half, in the final third Helensburgh found their second wind.

But a composed Clyde



managed to hold their ground and even had the final say scoring the remaining try of the match.

The final whistle came too early for the visitors to stage a comeback however, with the final score HM Naval Base Clyde 32-45 to Helensburgh Rugby Club.

Following the trophy presentation there was a post-match raffle which raised £154 for Over the Wall, a UK charity providing residential summer camps for children and their families coping with serious illnesses and conditions.

Lt Wylie's long and illustrious 35-year career with the Royal Navy included no less than 41 drafts both in the UK and abroad. He served at HM Naval Base Clyde initially as a Leading Physical Trainer, returning later in his career as an officer.

A well-known figure at Clyde, the Naval Base named their new state-of-the-art weights suite after him as a lasting memorial.

Masters live up to name

SENIOR rate Timmy Mallett keeps hold of the trophy after helping the Royal Navy Masters to victory at the Inter-Service Indoor Hockey Championships at Aldershot.

As well as PO(UW) Mallett, HMS Collingwood was also represented by LPT Sammy Howard as the side retained the John Gawly Trophy.

The Masters beat the RAF 5-1

before taking on the Army, who fielded a strong side. The RN raced to an early three-goal lead before the Army hit back with two goals. But it was the Senior Service who were victorious 6-2.

PO Mallett said: "Having taken the reins of the RN Masters at the beginning of this season a successful indoor championship was the perfect way for me and the

team to get started.

"The Inter-Service outdoor championships are coming up in early 2018 and I'm confident that we are laying strong foundations within the squad to allow us to be successful in that event too.

"It's an exciting time for masters level hockey with a culture of success developing within the RN group."



Fraser is named the ace of clubz

A SAILOR now based at HMS Raleigh has been recognised as the Royal Navy's top **physical trainer** thanks to his work on board HMS Portland.

LPT Fraser Bricknell was presented with the Tony Tyrwhitt-Bettridge trophy by Capt Iain Cull, head of Naval Physical Development.

LPT Bricknell was a member of HMS Portland's ship's company for a nine-month deployment, which saw the Type 23 frigate travel over 40,000 miles through the North Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indian, Pacific and South Atlantic oceans.

The 27-year-old's attitude and drive to make HMS Portland a fitter, healthier and more active unit singled him out for recognition and had an impact on every member of the ship's company.

He contributed to both the operational capability of the ship and the morale of those on board.

In 18 port visits he arranged 18 fixtures for the ship's sports team and set up a programme of adventurous training of which 72 percent of the crew took advantage.

LPT Bricknell integrated well with the Royal Marines on board, which culminated in a recreation of the 90-mile yomp across the Falklands undertaken by the Commandos during the 1982 conflict. The team completed the walk in three days.

LPT Bricknell said: "The walk was really hard work. I think I underestimated how hard

it would be, but finishing the walk was my highlight of the deployment. I will never, ever forget that walk. All the locals came out, including some Royal Marines who were there in 1982 and remained there to make their home. There were hundreds of people applauding us as we finished."

LPT Bricknell originally joined the Royal Navy as a submariner in 2007, but achieved his long-term ambition to become a physical trainer four years ago.

LPT Bricknell said: "It feels good to be singled out. The branch, in my opinion, is one of the most professional in the Royal Navy and really hard-working. To be honest I never really considered the award. I thought I was just doing my job and doing what I was expected to do. I'm mega proud."

The Tony Tyrwhitt-Bettridge trophy is named in memory of a CPOPT.

Capt Cull said: "This is a prestigious award. We had a significant number of nominations and all those nominated were very operationally focussed and very good, but we had to pick somebody."

"In LPT Bricknell's case he was at sea, not only doing his core role, but he had a high level of fitness and was engaged with the Command and the boarding team."

"He went over and above to develop the boarding team's strength and conditioning to enable them to do their job, and that's the link to the operational output of the ship."



● BRNC rugby players, in yellow and blue, go on the attack

Picture: Kenyatta's Photography

BRNC are new superstars

OFFICER Cadets at Britannia Royal Naval College narrowly beat their counterparts from RAF Cranwell to become the winners of the **Inter-Collegiate Games**.

Around 150 competitors took part in the event, held at BRNC, with teams going head-to-head in seven sports.

The RAF were victorious in the volleyball and water polo while BRNC showed their superiority on the football pitch and rugby field.

In the tug-of-war competition BRNC started well, winning the first two 'pulls', but the RAF team came back strong to take the next three 'pulls'.

The games also featured a one kilometre gig race on the River Dart – a completely new event for the RAF team.

With honours even everything rested on the last event; the eight-discipline **Superstars**-style competition, which BRNC won by one minute 30 seconds to become the overall winners.

Event organiser PO Howard Peplow said: "The competitiveness and fitness levels were very high, but the fact that our Cadets undergo disciplined sessions, known as Initial Military Fitness, showed in the final **Superstars** event."

BRNC plan a return fixture at RAF Cranwell next year.

UK team squeeze to Kentish Cup win

THE Armed Forces UK football team retained the Kentish Cup with victory over the French and a draw against the Dutch at HMS Temeraire.

Having won their opening game over the French 2-1, FS De-Long's men were buoyed following a 2-2 draw between the French and Dutch teams.

Cpl Tom Claissie, team captain who is celebrating five years in the role, said: "I missed out on the first game due to family commitments, but the lads have been brilliant."

The usual Dutch passing game wasn't present from the off and great work from L/Cpl Peter Williams and AET Danny Earle led to an opening chance for L/Cpl Danny Stoneman, whose 20-yard run saw him shoot from the edge of the area, forcing a save from Dutch keeper Vendrig.

By the 20-minute mark the UKAF men were slowly getting to grips as the Dutch team went into their shell, with Pte Josh Hughes causing havoc out wide.

On the half-hour Earle received a yellow card after going for the ball and connecting with Vendrig in the visitors' goal, and ten minutes later a powerful run from stand-in captain L/Cpl Rob Farkins from inside his own half began the best move of the game and subsequent opening goal.

Powering through the inside right position, shadowed by Dutch midfielders, he found Hughes with a one-two before sending a second pass out wide which the Navy man fired across the box for AET Danny Kerr to fire home.

A chance for a second came from a Cpl Alex Woodhouse 42nd-minute free kick that was headed over by Farkins, while on the stroke of half-time Dutch defender Schur nearly headed into his own net, with Vendrig pushing the ball to safety.

The second half saw the hosts



● L/Cpl Rob Farkins stretches for the ball; Right, AET Danny Kerr battles for the ball

Pictures: Peter Davies

produce a comfortable display with some promising attacks that were not put away – something which would come to haunt them.

On the hour some fabulous passing from Stoneman, Woodhouse and Todd had the Dutchmen chasing shadows, while Kerr then shot instead of passing to better-placed teammates, as RAF man and team captain Cpl Claissie entered the fray for the first time instead of Kerr.

The game turned in a 30-second window on 70 minutes as a superb break from the hosts saw Stoneman shoot instead of passing to the well-placed Todd. The Dutchmen countered quickly and Sgt Carl Evans was adjudged to have handled and the men in orange levelled from the spot.

A different looking Dutch

team now bombarded the UKAF half, with stalwart defending being the order of the day from the hosts.

Having made it to the 90-minute mark it was down to keeper L/Cpl Luke Cairney to save the day with two brilliant moments with the gloves, acrobatically tipping one volleyed effort over.

FS De-Long, who described himself as emotional after the final whistle, said: "We defended well, we had to be careful, and we got the victory, it was more squeezing than pleasing, but we have earned the right to be the best and we are the best."

AET Kerr added: "We worked the ball well early on and the goal was excellent to be involved in and then I could not really miss."

"The draw was not what we wanted, we made hard work of it initially, three in a row is



something special, unbelievable, the Dutch put us under pressure late on, but we really should have put it to bed by then."

"They got themselves in the position to get the penalty, and they really gave us a hard game, we are all shattered, but it's a great feeling now, the lads all singing after the game is what it means. Backroom staff, manager, everyone dug deep – it's just great."

Report: Dan Abrahams

Dragons too hot for Armed Forces

WALES captain Carys Phillips bagged a hat-trick of tries as a Wales Development XV beat UK Armed Forces 39-17 in their Armistice Day fixture at Cardiff Arms Park.

The game, some 100 years after the same venue hosted the first-ever UK women's rugby union match, saw UKAF captain Sian Williams lead her side out.

The match raises funds for the Royal British Legion and their Live On campaign as they continue to support Servicemen and women, who have suffered in the line of duty.

The Royal Navy's Lt Cdr Charlotte Fredrickson was on the bench for the UKAF and it was the visitors who started the game more brightly and soon had Wales under pressure.

Strong ball carrying from forwards, with Alex Hardy, Sian Williams, Amy Cockayne and Sarah Batley all to the fore, allowed scrum half Lucy Nye to control the game.

However though they went close they couldn't find a way through the Wales defence and following turnover ball it was Wales who opened the scoring.

Good work at the breakdown secured the turnover and quick hands gave left wing Jess Williams the room to go in at the corner.



The score lifted Wales and two further tries put them in command of the match, but UKAF received a much-needed boost with an individual try. Fly half Gemma Rowlands added the conversion and at half time Wales led 17-7.

The second half was largely controlled by Wales, who retained possession for long periods and entertained the vocal crowd with some flowing rugby.

With their forwards winning the battle at the breakdown they were able to launch multi-phase attacks at UKAF as they looked to extend their lead.

Despite some fierce and committed defence from UKAF, it was only going to be a matter of time before the pressure told.

With two further tries they increased their lead to 29-7 before UKAF's hard-working prop Batley crashed over from



short range, to give the away side the faintest glimmer of hope.

However Wales showed a ruthless streak with two more tries before UKAF Women scored through the last play of the game as Cockayne broke the tackle and had the pace to outflank the home defence and cross in the right-hand corner. Final score 39-17

Report: Geraint Ashton Jones
Pictures: Cpl Tom Evans

Boring down on the main prize



● Midshipman Richard Stearn shoots, watched by coach Pat Hunt



● Mick Jordan, Darren Sprules, Pat Hunt (seated), Adrian Phillips, Charles Dickenson and Richard Stearn



● From left, Mick Jordan coaches Charles Dickenson while Cpl Putter (shooter) is coached by Pat Hunt during the Full Bore Trafalgar Match at Bisley Range

SERVING and retired Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel took part in the annual **Full Bore Trafalgar Match**.

Organised by the Royal Navy Target Rifle Club, competitors used 7.62mm calibre bolt-action, iron-sighted rifles to shoot from 300, 600, 900 and 1,000 yards at Bisley Range.

Due to operational commitments only four serving members of the Royal Navy were able to compete, meaning all of their scores would count.

After ten shots each at 900 yards, the serving RN team scored 177-16 with the retired team achieving 187-16.

The combined score for the Royal Navy side in the 1,000-yard shooting was 179-14 against the retired team's 173-5.

After lunch, the match resumed at 300 and 600 yards with an ongoing duel between experienced shooters Cpl Putter and Charles Dickenson, a member of the GB Target Rifle Team.

With last year's match having been won by a single point by the retired, the serving shooters had a point to prove.

With the shooting complete, the four overall scores of the serving team and the best four overall scores of the retired team were compared and it was a draw with both teams on 736 so the outcome would be settled using the V-Bull count.

With 63 V-Bulls the serving team comfortably beat the retired team's V-Bull count of 53.

Gifts were awarded to the top scorers in each team, Cpl Putter and Lt Cdr Dickenson (Rtd).

If you are interested in taking up the sport of target rifle shooting, email Iain Thomson at iain.thomson269@btinternet.com

The Naval Service supports

Target Rifle and F-Class, Combat Shooting and Clay Pigeon Shooting through the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Rifle Association.

If you would like more information on any of these disciplines, email Lt Tim Westmaas at t.j.westmaas@cranfield.ac.uk

Sights on Olympics

ROYAL Marine John Costello proved his acumen with an air rifle when he won a bronze medal at the Field Target World Championships in Wales.

And now he has been selected for the GB Target Sprint team – a new sport hoping to showcase at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

John is no stranger to winning – he took gold in the Field Target Junior World Championships in Poland in 2006 and the adult championships in Germany in 2013. He also won a silver medal in the 2009 adult Field Target World Championships in South Africa.

John, who serves with Commando Helicopter Force at RNAS Yeovilton, shoots with a Steyer LG1110.177 calibre single shot air rifle, which weighs about 12lbs. Using a Sightron LR1RMH 10x50x60 he is required to shoot at targets that vary from 15mm to 40mm at distances from ten to 50 metres.

Having attended Tudhoe Comprehensive School in Spennymoor, County Durham, and Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Darlington, John began his working career in sales marketing before he and his brother set up their own sales marketing company.

Aged 23 John decided he wanted challenges and a career that was demanding.

He enlisted into the Royal Marines in 2014 and passed out from the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, Devon, in 2015.

He first joined 45 Cdo and was deployed to the Mediterranean before completing an armourers' course.

John was then assigned to join the Jungles in Somerset.

As an Armourer in the Combat Service Support Squadron, John had only been in post for two months when he entered and won a bronze medal in Wales, seeing off more than 300 competitors.

John recently took up Target Sprint, in which competitors run three 400-metre laps without a weapon, stop after 100 metres at a firing point where their weapon is waiting, a standing shoot at five "knock down" targets is followed by the second 100-metre run. Returning once again to the firing point the competitor repeats the shoot before running the final 100 metres. Scores are based on times and targets hit.

Target Sprint is a new sport and could be a demonstration sport in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Picture: PO Phot Si Ethell, RNPOTY



Emma lands on her feet

SUB Lt Emma Reynolds leads by example during her three-month attachment to the Joint Services Parachute Wing at Netheravon in Wiltshire.

The Royal Navy officer has been assisting with the delivery of Adventurous Training to tri-Service personnel.

"I have had a unique insight into the structure, systems and people involved in military adventurous training, and the take-home factor has been that it is a fantastic organisation which provides a wealth of opportunities, in reference to both the courses run, and the temporary attachments available," said Emma.

JSPW, which also operates out of RAF Weston-on-Green, is predominately Army led but what struck Emma the most was the low percentage – fewer than ten – of students from the Naval Service.

The foundation courses, taking someone from zero to first jump and beyond, are run almost every week from March until November, with further progression courses running concurrently.

"However, it isn't all about jumping out of a plane – a key part of the course is about developing coping strategies, trust, and overcoming fear, which students continually relate directly to operations in post-course reviews," said Emma. "As such, I can highly recommend the courses – even if the weather isn't fantastic, there is still great benefit to the person in attendance."

"However, the main challenge I faced was not being a Naval officer in an Army environment, but more coming straight out of Dartmouth and essentially doing the job of a private soldier."

"Granted, I was instructing and coaching as well as the normal duties, but being exposed to the general lives, working patterns, attitudes, discussions, and disciplines of the more junior ranks was definitely a valuable experience and an eye-opener – if only because of the greater variety in discussed topics than those at BRNC."

"It was a step further from the Initial Ship Acquaint at BRNC, where Officer Cadets live as a Junior Rate for a month – as such, I feel that I am in a much better position of understanding when I have my own division."

During her posting at JSPW(N), Emma had the chance to meet the RNRM personnel on the courses and introduce them to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sport Parachuting Association (RNRMSPA), which can assist if they wish to take the sport further. This has seen an increase in membership.

Sports parachuting within the RNRM continues to grow, with the RNRMSPA supporting aspiring and qualified parachutists, helping with coaching, free kit and equipment, organised weekends, and assistance with competitions. Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel receive a significant discount on training courses and 50 per cent off all jumps at Netheravon.

For new jumpers recently qualified, this means a significant reduction in the initial financial outlay – likewise for those in the process of gaining their licence, as training costs are reduced. For experienced skydivers, it provides a group of people to jump with and steps towards more advanced disciplines such as wingsuiting.

Emma added: "I have greatly benefitted, both personally and professionally. We have had training from other international teams, furthering my personal progression in both the instructing and sport sides of parachuting – which I feel was a contributor towards success at the Armed Forces Parachute Championships."

"Professionally I, along with the other staff on base, all qualified as team medics, completed up-to-date CMS, and have been given the chance to book onto language courses."

Applications for basic parachute courses can be completed through Defence Gateway. Any aspiring parachutists, or current skydivers who haven't heard of the RNRMSPA are encouraged to email RNRMSPA@gmail.com



Carry on Jack



Title win ensures historic night for Royal Navy boxing



ROYAL Navy boxer Jack Stringer keeps a tight hold of his new title belt as he laps up the applause from an appreciative crowd.

The Royal Marine became the first Senior Service boxer to win the prestigious English Middleweight crown at a boxing show in Portsmouth.

But there was little time to celebrate as Jack was back in the gym at HMS Temeraire, working as hard as ever in preparation of his first defence of the title.

Jack, 21, a member of 45 Commando at Arbroath, has to successfully defend the belt three times in order to keep the crown.

"It feels good to have won, especially as I think I was a convincing winner of the first two rounds," said Jack, who became interested in the sport at the age of seven as his grandfather Ron Chandler boxed.

His opponent, Heart of Portsmouth's Walid Adenas, was far more on the offensive in the third and final round of the Titchfield ABC show at Portsmouth Guildhall.

"He really rushed at me in the third round but it wasn't enough," said Jack, who became interested in the sport at the age of seven as his grandfather Ron Chandler boxed.

"I decided to stop for a year in 2015 as I had really fallen out of love with boxing," said Jack, who used the time to concentrate on his basic training with the Royal Marines.

"Then I was asked to join the

Royal Navy team and now I'm back in love with boxing and happy to carry on."

The Portsmouth fighter was soon back in the gym, earning fulsome praise from Navy boxing coach CPO Chris Smith, who said: "Jack has the right mindset and there's no stopping him now. Our main aim for him now is to help him join Marine George Crotty in the England squad."

Crotty, also a member of 45 Cdo, took the England Boxing 2017 light heavyweight title in June this year when he beat GB No1 Tom Whittaker-Hart.

Fellow boxing coach Marine Ben Pringle added: "Jack is a great example to our boxers and has a big year ahead of him."

When he was 15 Jack won the prestigious Golden Gloves title after becoming the first British boxer to beat England Schoolboy Champion Patrick McCann in the national final of the class 4 70kg division.

Jack, who joined the Royal Marines in 2015, was last year a member of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Boxing Association team to tour Australia.

Jack was due to conduct his first defence of his belt as Navy News went to press.

For information about RN boxing visit www.rnrmboxing.co.uk, follow the association on Twitter @rnrmboxing, Instagram [royalnavyboxing](https://www.instagram.com/royalnavyboxing) or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/rnrmboxing

Pictures:
LPhoto Sam Seeley

